



THE Shadow[®]

DYNAMITE[®]

The
DEATH
of
MARGO
LANE

MATT WAGNER
WITH
BRENNAN WAGNER





THE Shadow



The DEATH of MARGO LANE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
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COLORS BY
BRENNAN WAGNER

LETTERED BY
**A LARGER WORLD
STUDIOS**

(THE DEATH OF MARGO LANE)

ROB STEEN
(THE CURSE OF BLACKBEARD'S SKULL)

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*In my many years as his agent,
his companion and his confidant...*

*...I had witnessed more than my share of the eerie, the
brutal and the macabre. I too would come to glimpse
"WHAT EVIL LURKS IN THE HEARTS OF MEN".*

*Yet no series of events were as
unsettling and had such devastating
impact on my soul...*

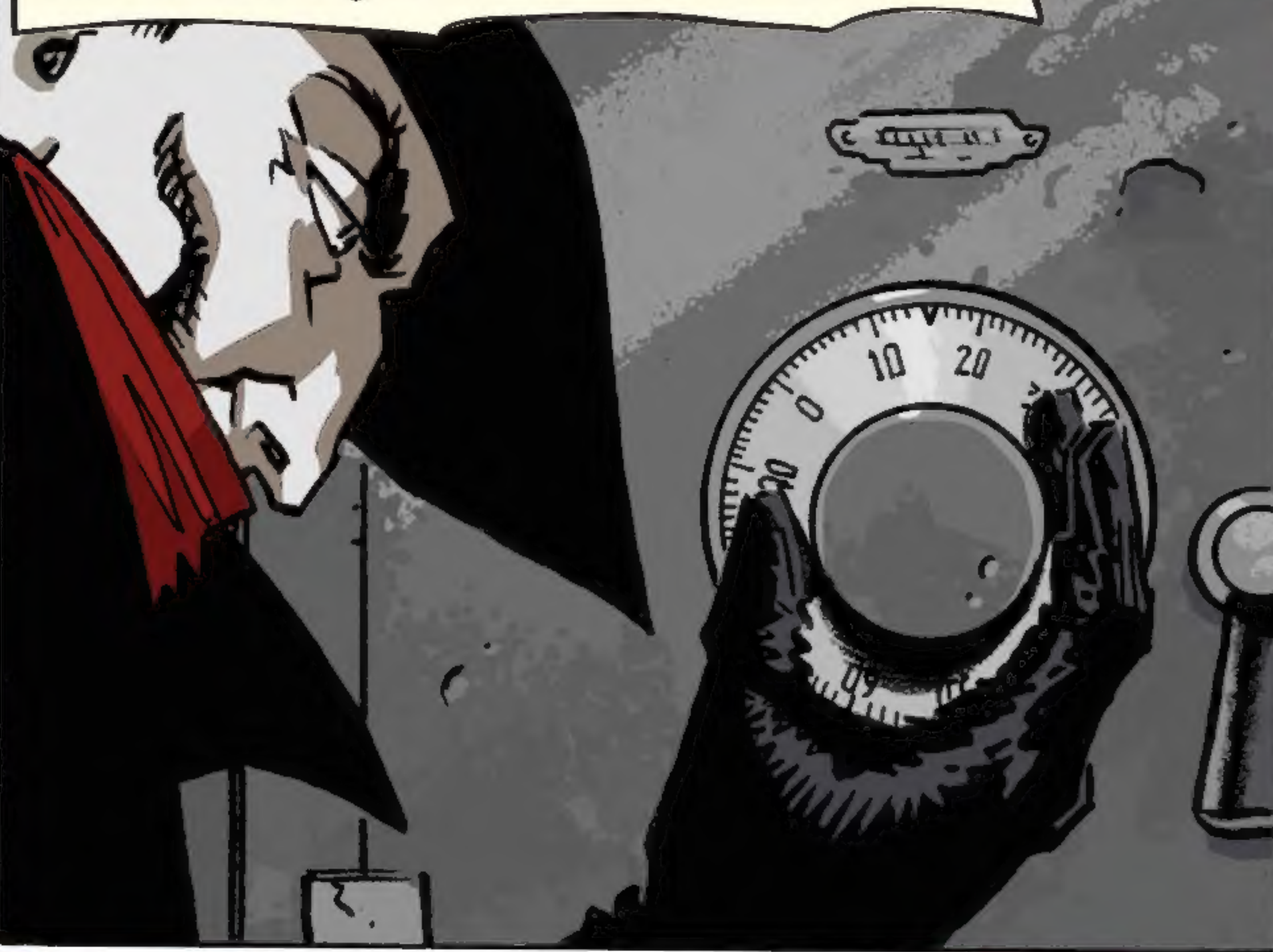
*...as the baffling case of
THE RED EMPRESS.*



For years, crime among the Tongs of Chinatown had been reduced to a street-level nuisance.



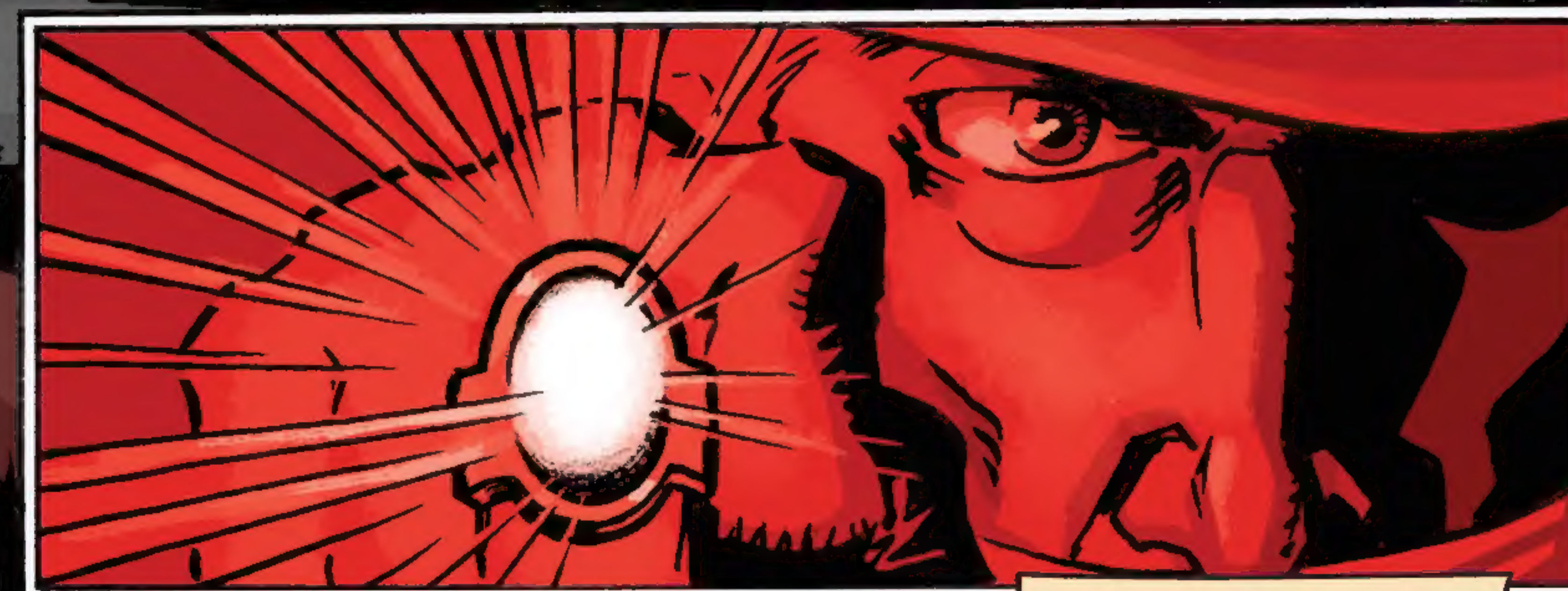
But a new and aggressive presence had arisen of late, sparking a bold wave of violent offenses, even encroaching on mob-controlled territories.



Despite his many contacts within the Asian-American community, **THE SHADOW** found his efforts stymied on every front.

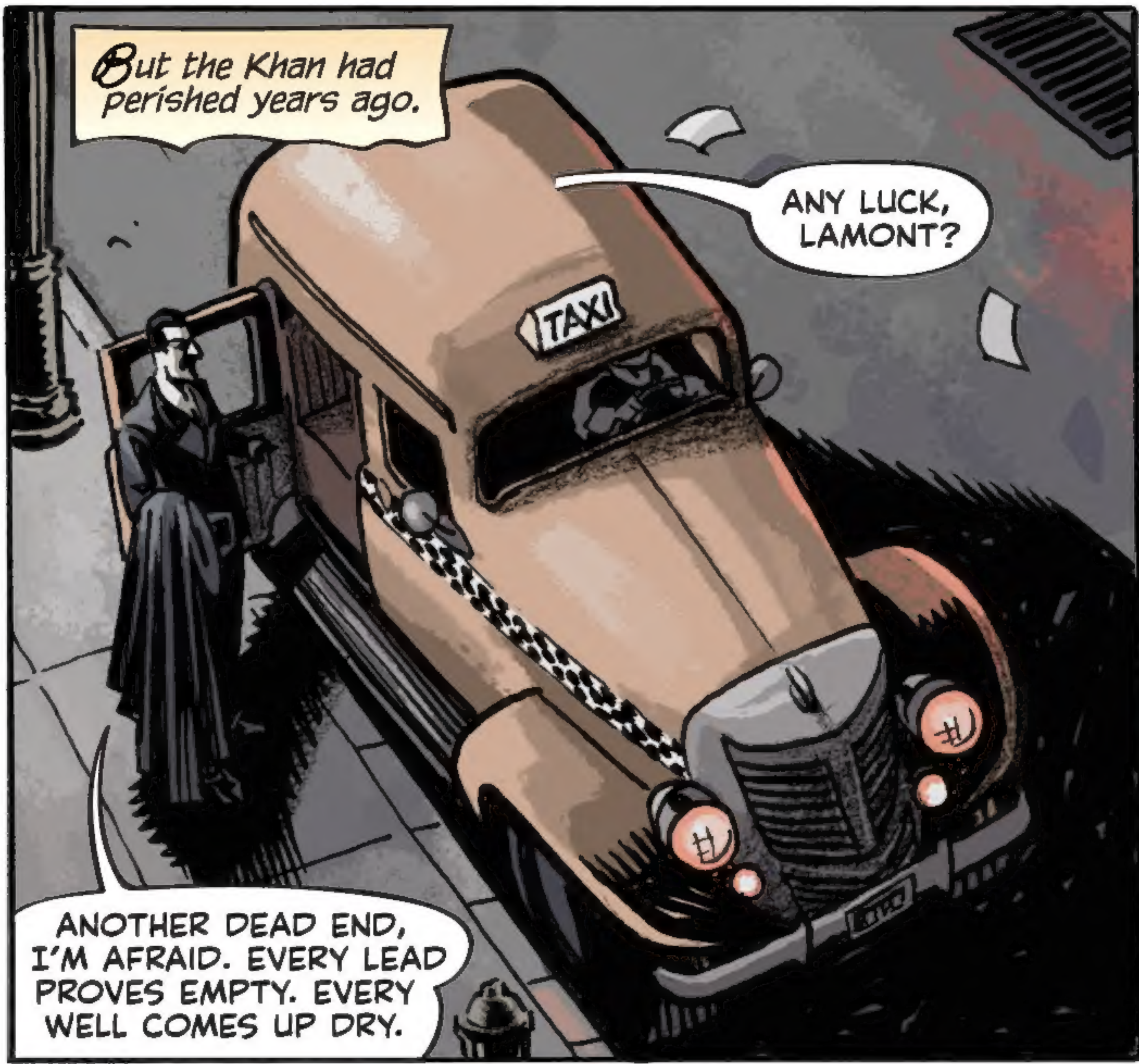


The mysterious head of this nefarious surge--the rumored Red Empress--proved as elusive and deadly as his former nemesis.



The imperious despot, **Shiwan Khan**.





But the Khan had perished years ago.

ANY LUCK, LAMONT?

ANOTHER DEAD END, I'M AFRAID. EVERY LEAD PROVES EMPTY. EVERY WELL COMES UP DRY.



SORRY TO HEAR IT, BOSS. Y'HEADED BACK TO JERSEY?

NO, WE'LL STAY IN THE CITY TONIGHT. THE WEST-SIDE APARTMENT PLEASE, SHREVEY.

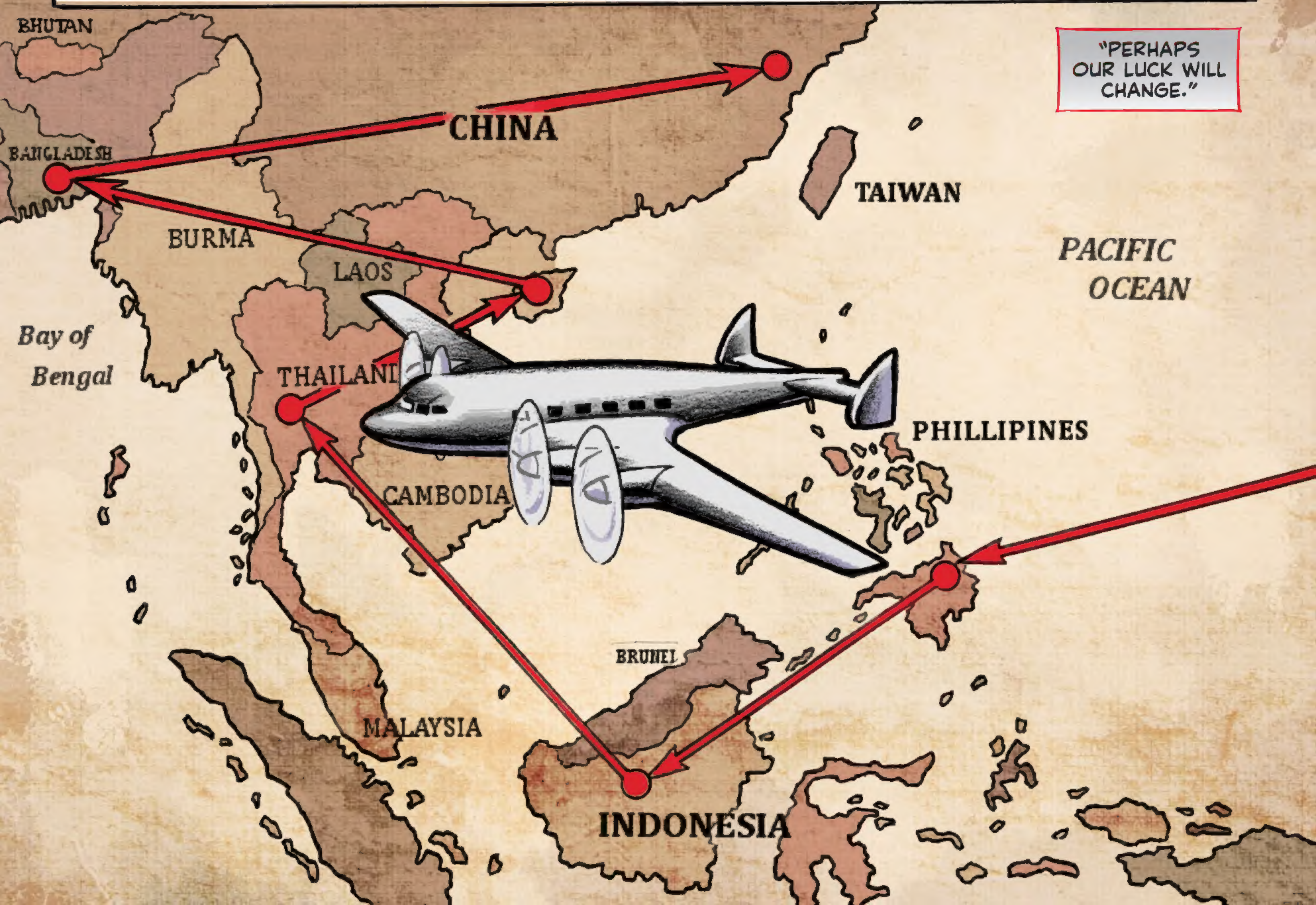


I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO CHOICE, MARGO.

WE'VE GOT TO TRACK THIS SCOURGE BACK TO ITS VERY ROOT.

YOU MEAN... CHINA?!

YES... I HAVE MANY CONTACTS AND RESOURCES IN THE FAR EAST.



"PERHAPS OUR LUCK WILL CHANGE."

And so, for the first time, I was exposed to the exotic lands that had spawned the nexus of his crusade.

Where he had learned to harness his own shadow in the service of Justice.

Our travels took us anywhere he suspected evidence of the Red Empress and her criminal network.

If, in fact, she actually was a real woman.

Yet, even here... the trail was frustratingly vague. Our quarry seemed almost a myth.

Finally, a Mandarin sage he knew offered this bit of wisdom:

BEWARE, MY FRIEND, OF THE HIDDEN SERPENT YOU SEEK TO SNARE.



"PERHAPS
ITS TARGET...
IS YOU."

Our return to the
States took a more
leisurely route.

Time to reflect.
And plan.

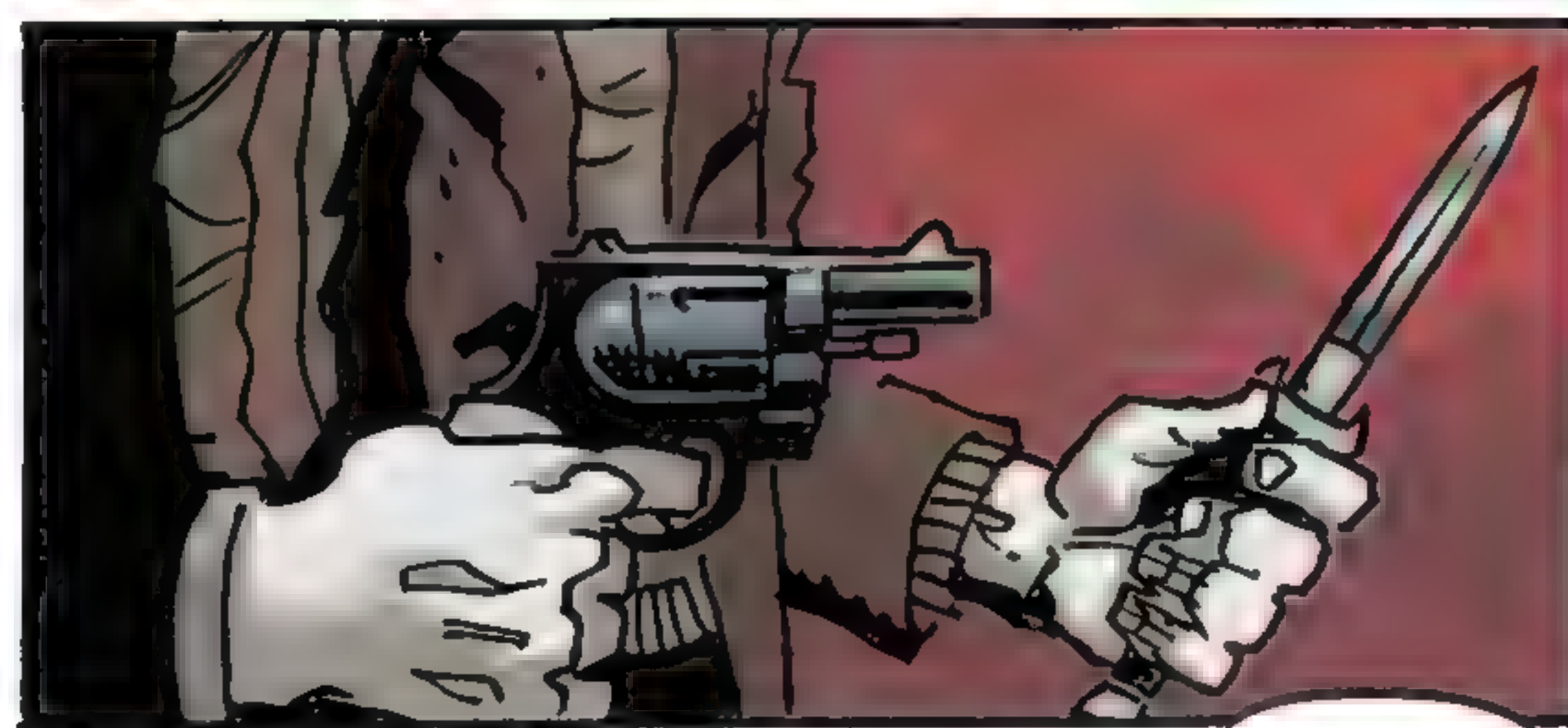
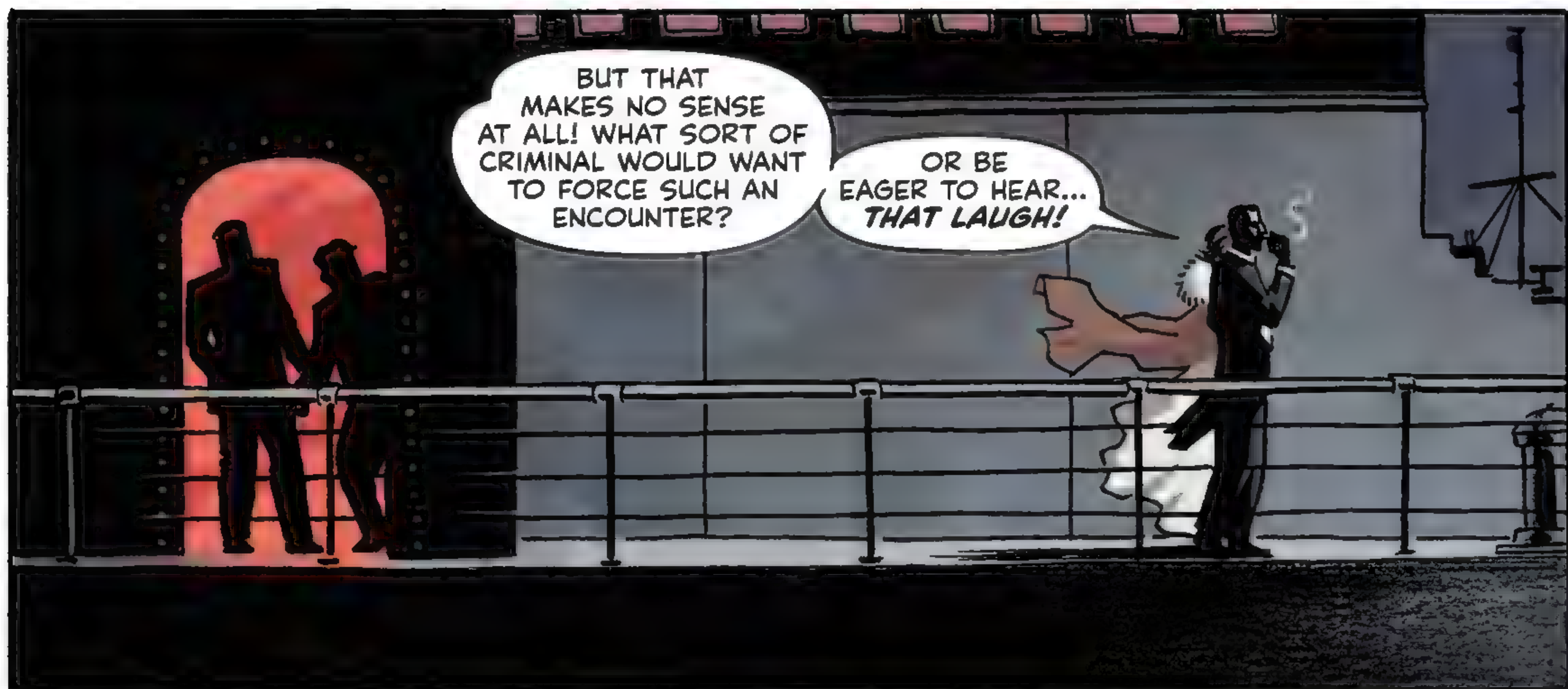
PERHAPS WHAT
LIU ZHANG SAID
WAS TRUE.

IF THIS **RED EMPRESS**
IS LAUNCHING A FULL-SCALE
ASSAULT ON THE NEW YORK
CRIME SCENE, HER METHODS ARE
DECIDEDLY MORE DRAMATIC
THAN EFFICIENT.

HOW SO?

THINK OF IT, MARGO...MURDER,
EXTORTION, LARCENY. ALL LOUD AND
MESSY...JUST THE **OPPOSITE** OF
HOW A SERIOUS SYNDICATE BOSS
WANTS TO RUN THEIR BUSINESS--
THROUGH RACKETEERING.

AND ALL
TRANSGRESSIONS
THAT ARE SURE
TO ATTRACT
THE SHADOW'S
ATTENTION.





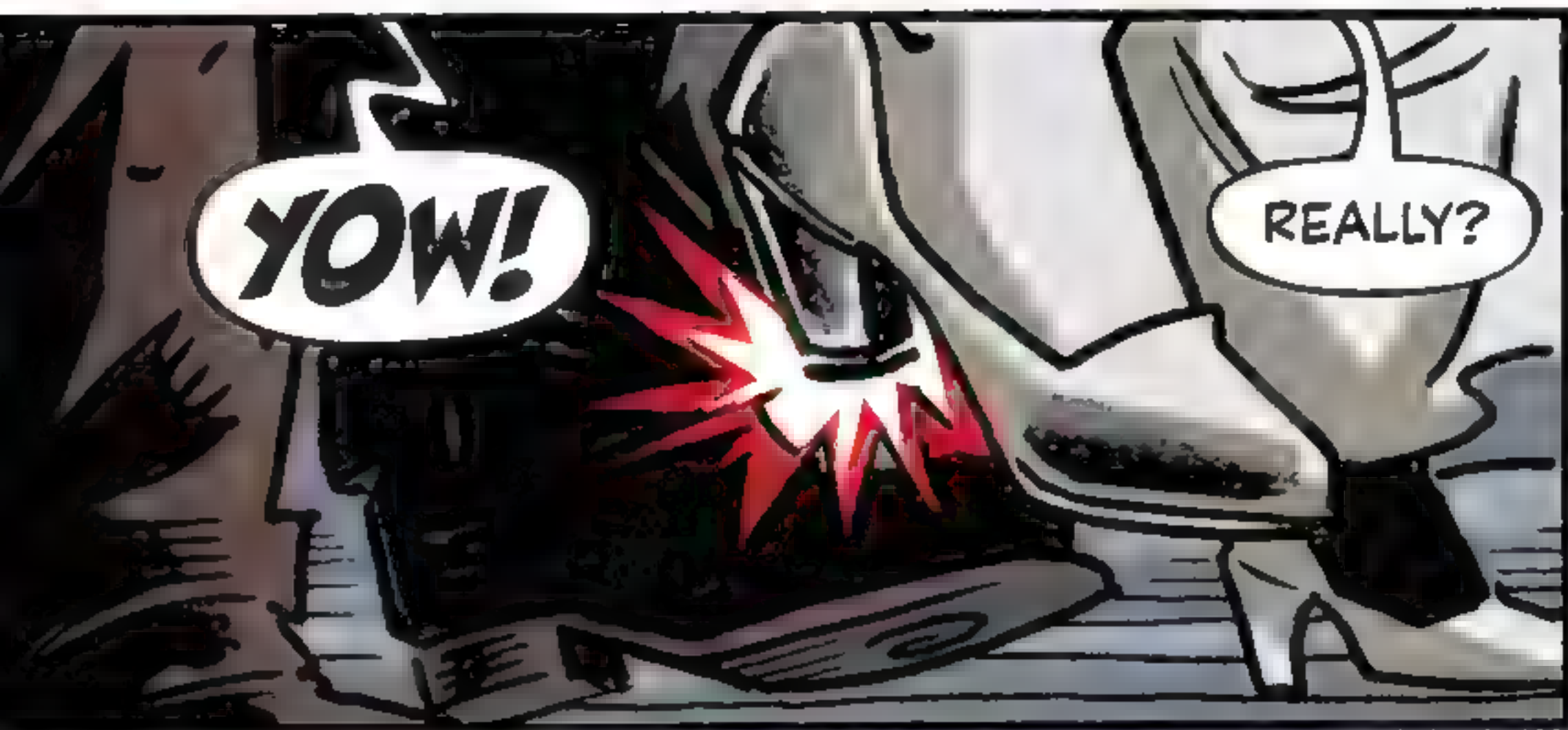
BUT Y'GONNA
HAVE TO GIVE YER
REGARDS TO BROADWAY!
YER GOIN' FOR A
LI'L SWIM TONIGHT!

WELL NOW.
UP FROM STEERAGE...
WOULDN'T YOU
SAY, LAMONT?

I'M SURE YOU
WON'T FIND *THESE* TWO
LISTED ON THE SHIP'S
MANIFEST, MY DEAR.

**ENOUGH
SQUAWKIN',
BOTH YEZ!**
NOW...DO AS WE SAY
AN' THIS WILL--

WHAT DO
YOU *THINK* OF
THAT, MARGO?
WE'RE TO DO AS
HE SAYS...



YOW!

REALLY?



GUESS I'M A
BIT **HARD OF
HEARING!**



ALRIGHT, SISTER!
HOLD STILL OR I'LL
PUT A BULLET RIGHT
THRU YOUR EYE!

NOW...
**WHERE IS
HE?!**

WHAT...?
WHO--?

YOUR FELLA!!
ONE SECOND, HE'S
STANDIN' RIGHT
THERE...AND NOW,
HE'S GONE!

**WHERE
IS HE?!!**



The main comic panel depicts a scene on the deck of a ship at night. A man in a tuxedo and a woman in a fur coat are in the foreground. In the background, a body is seen falling from the ship into the dark water. The ship's railing and portholes are visible on the left. The sky is dark with a full moon and stars.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE RED EMPRESS, NO DOUBT.

BUT THEY... WEREN'T ASIANS!

FREE AGENTS, I ASSUME. SEEKING TO COLLECT A PRICE ON OUR HEADS.

BUT HOW...?

THIS ONE HAD A KNIFE.

I SUSPECT THEY MEANT TO KEEP A HAND FROM EACH US FOR IDENTIFICATION.



EVERYTHING ALRIGHT, FOLKS?
THOUGHT I HEARD A--

JUST AN EVENING
STROLL ON DECK, ENSIGN!
BRRRR--TOO CHILLY
FOR ME, THOUGH!

AH...
VERY GOOD
THEN, MISS.
SIR.



THERE'S A MORE SALIENT POINT
TO OUR WOULD-BE ATTACKERS'
PRESENCE THOUGH, MARGO.

WE WERE SPOTTED
SOMEWHERE ALONG
OUR ROUTE.

WHICH MEANS THAT
SOMEONE KNOWS OF
OUR MISSION.

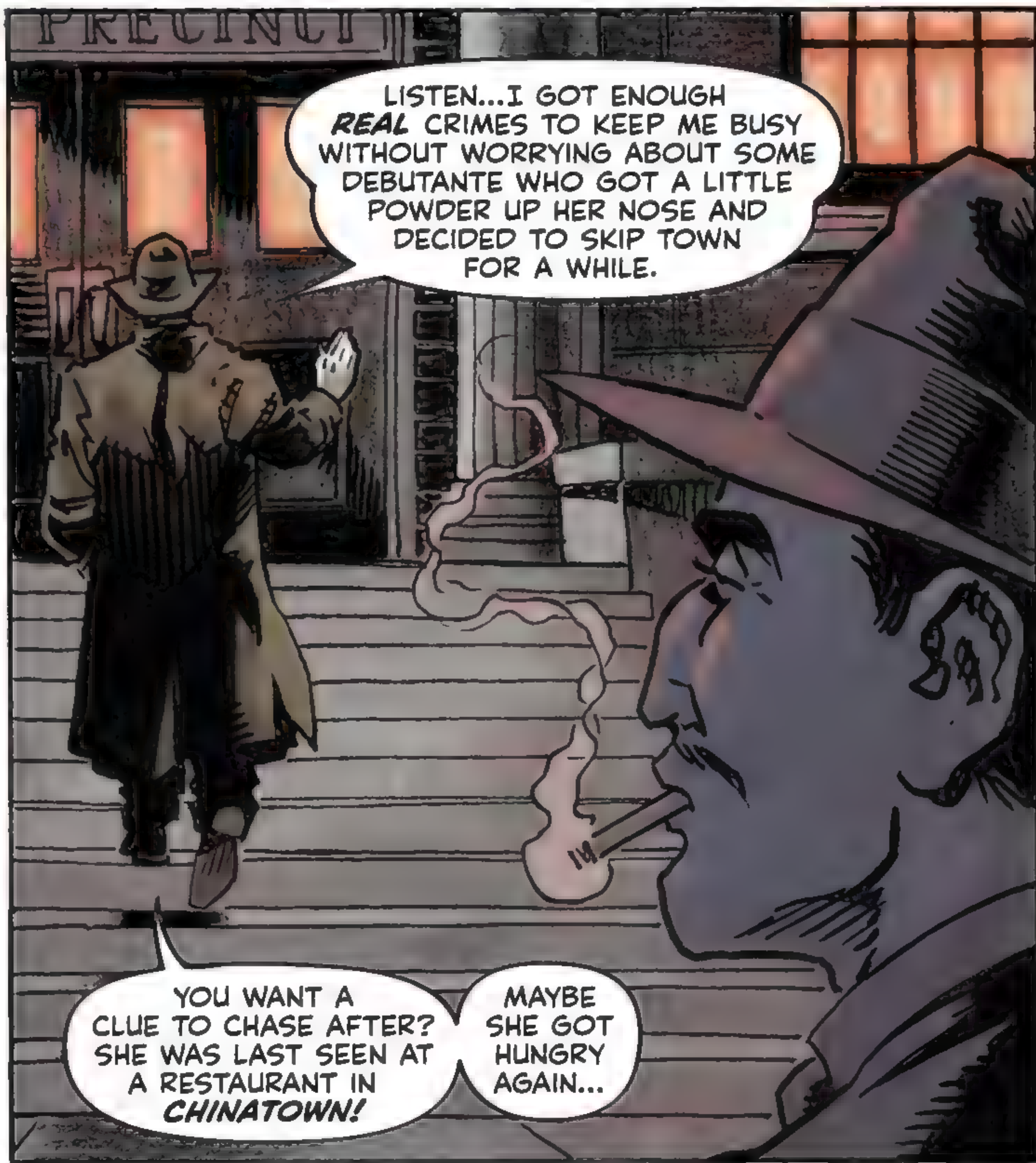


AND MY IDENTITY...AS
THE SHADOW!



*After that...the streets and
avenues of home suddenly
seemed far chillier.*



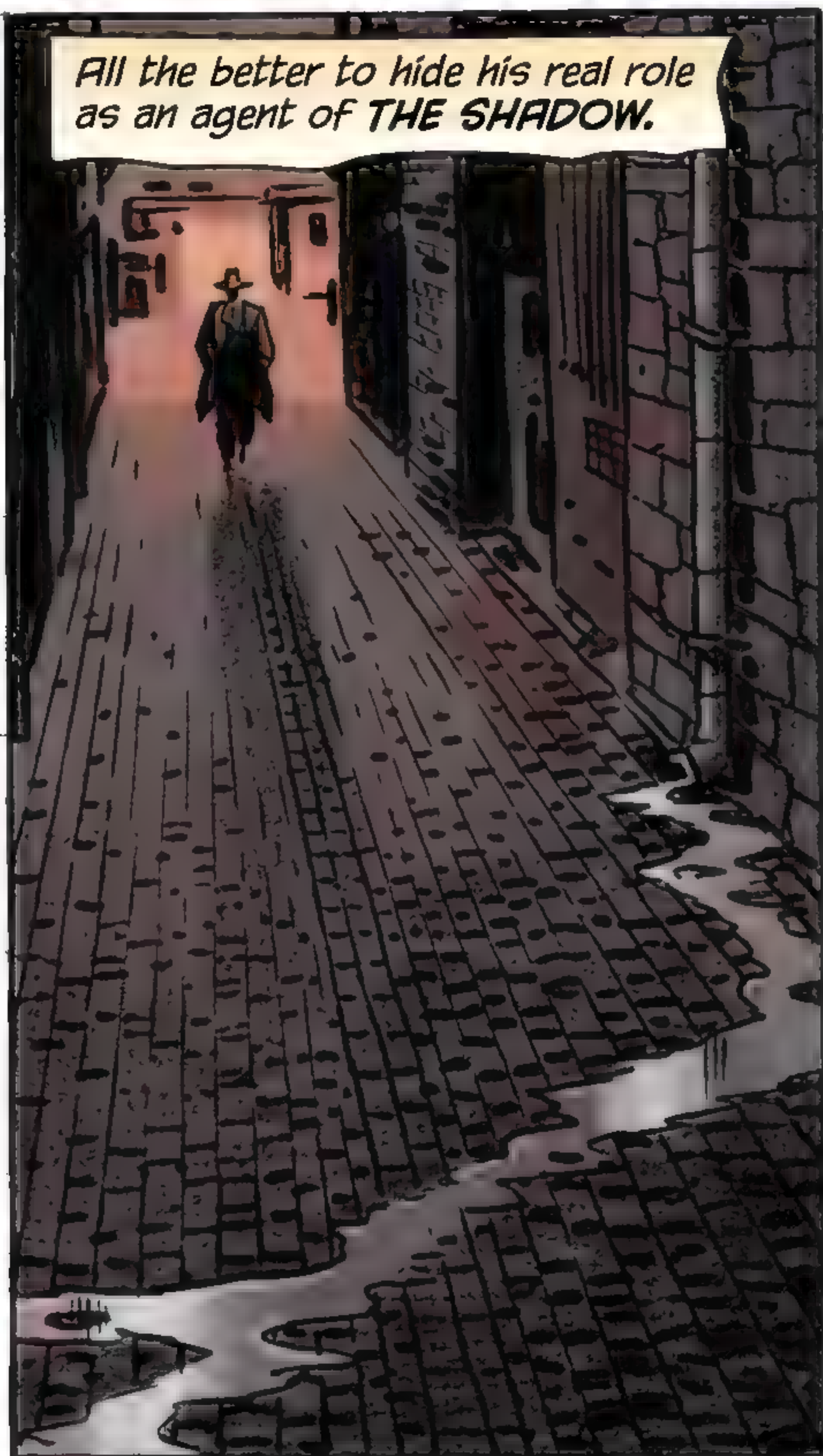




Key to the success of his crusade was his network of covert agents, each chosen for the specific role or skill they could contribute to his cause.

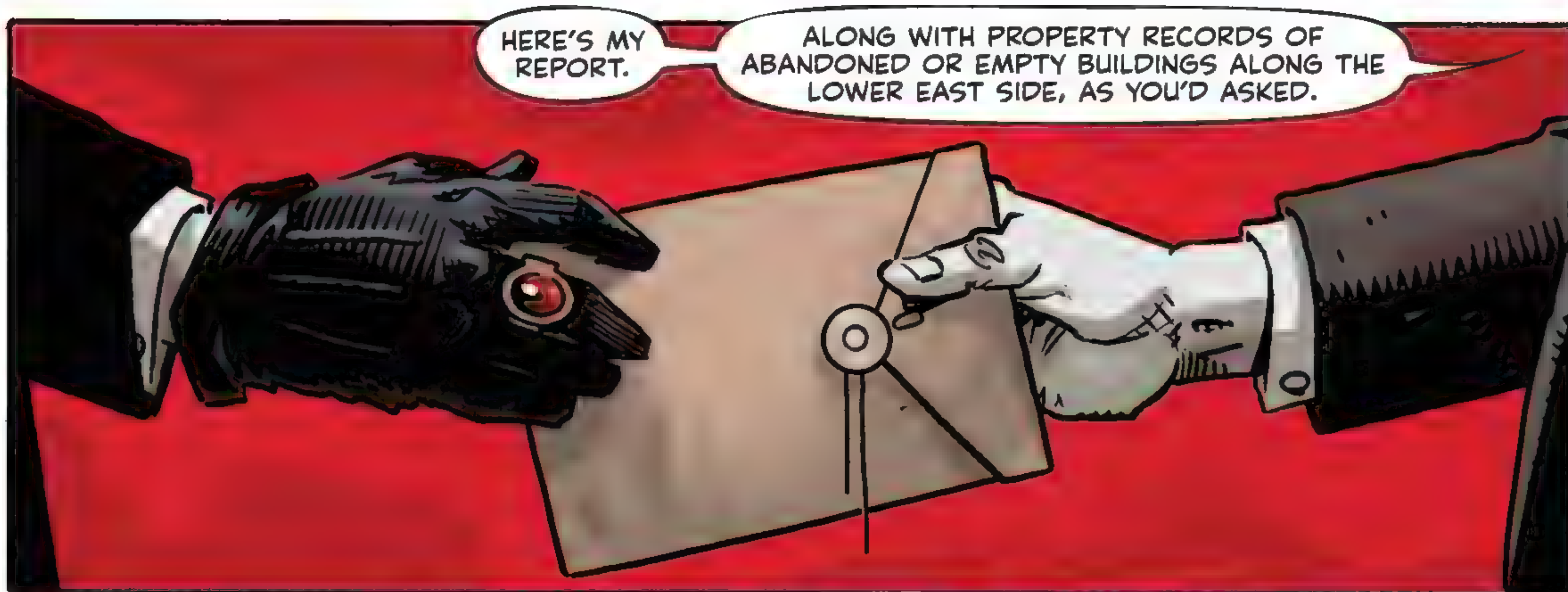
CLYDE BURKE was an investigative journalist who worked for one of the daily tabloid rags.

*All the better to hide his real role as an agent of **THE SHADOW**.*



THE POLICE ARE STILL UNWILLING TO TREAT IT AS A KIDNAPPING...BUT ALL THE EVIDENCE I'VE MANAGED TO DIG UP SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT FACT.



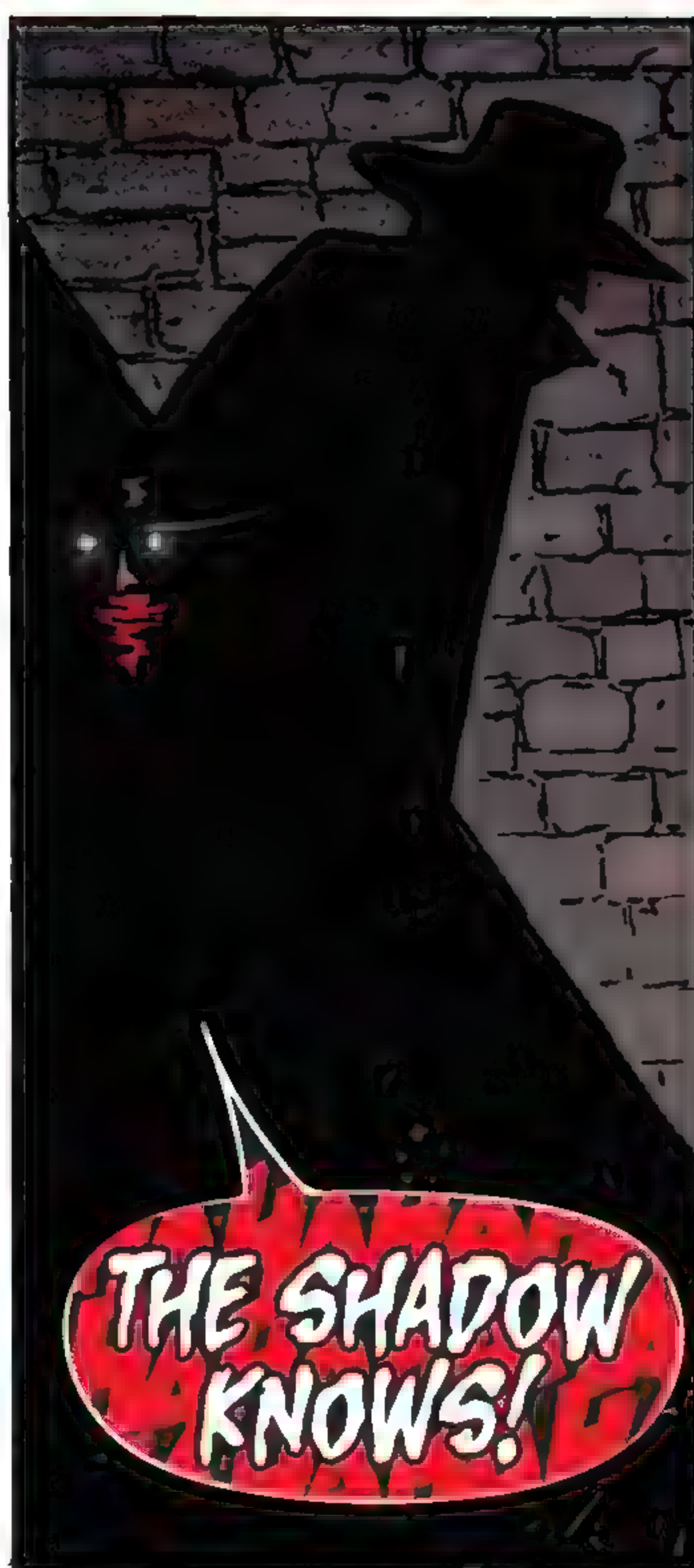


HERE'S MY REPORT.

ALONG WITH PROPERTY RECORDS OF ABANDONED OR EMPTY BUILDINGS ALONG THE LOWER EAST SIDE, AS YOU'D ASKED.



FOLLOW-UP ON ANY FURTHER LEADS IN THE SULLIVAN CASE. THE FETID STENCH OF CRIME CANNOT STAY HIDDEN LONG.



THE SHADOW KNOWS!



CHRIST! ALWAYS GLAD I AIN'T ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THAT LAUGH!



"AS PER USUAL, CLYDE BURKE'S INVESTIGATIVE WORK IS FIRST-RATE! HIS REPORT LEAVES LITTLE DOUBT."



GLORIA SULLIVAN HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED. EYEWITNESSES PLACE HER IN CHINATOWN ON THE NIGHT SHE WENT MISSING... IN A NIGHTCLUB ASSOCIATED WITH THE *HIP SING* TONG.

THE *HIP SING* ARE, IN TURN, THE FACTION I'D MOST SUSPECTED OF BEING UNDER CONTROL OF THE MYSTERIOUS *RED EMPRESS*.

WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT MISS SULLIVAN'S FAMILY HAVE BEEN SILENCED UNDER THREAT OF THEIR DAUGHTER'S LIFE.

BUT...IF THEY DON'T WANT TO RANSOM HER, THEN WHY--?

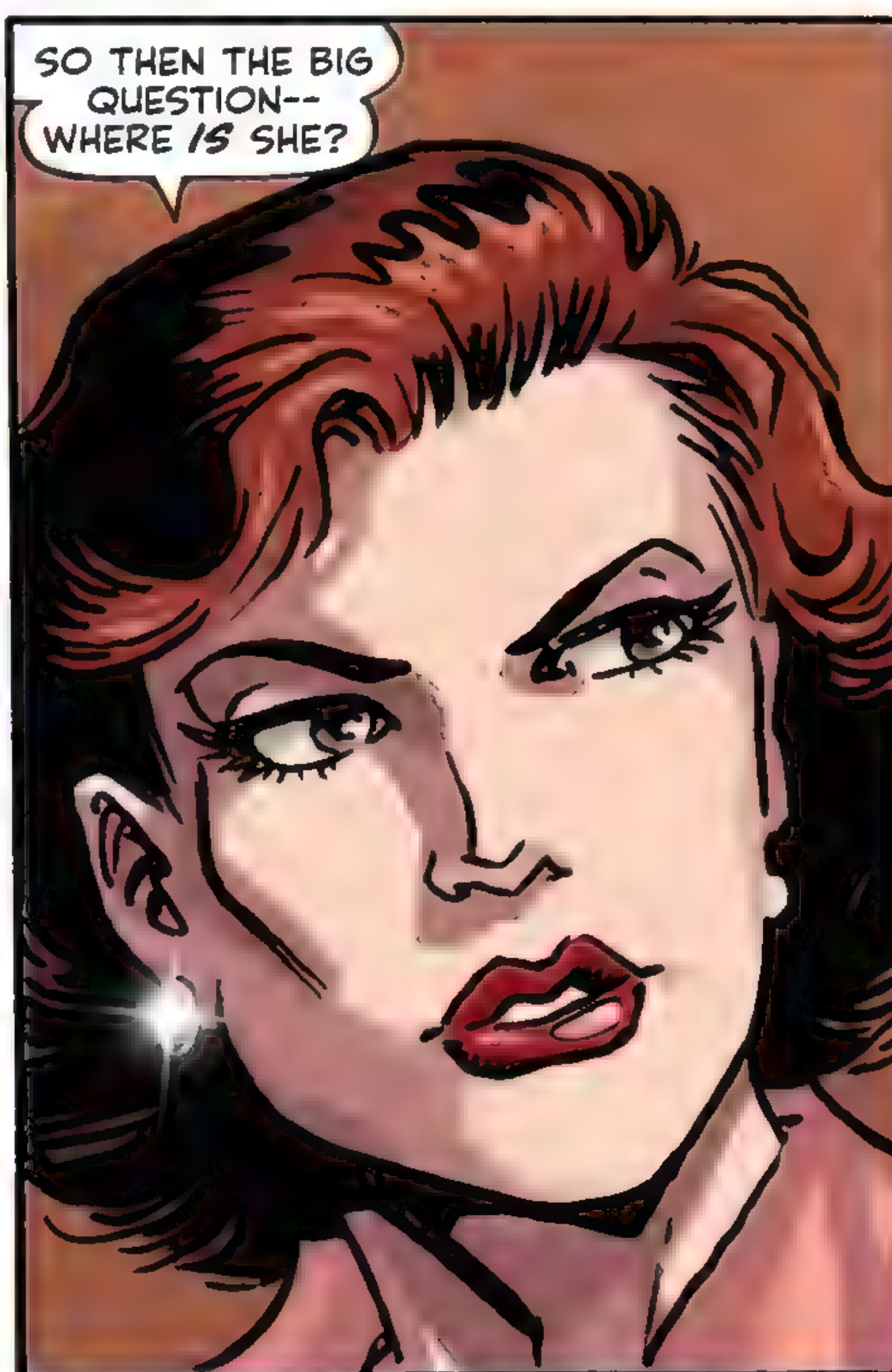


TO DRAW ME OUT.



WITH THE POLICE UNCONVINCED OF THE CRIME, IT LEAVES ONLY *THE SHADOW* TO RESCUE MISS SULLIVAN FROM HER CAPTIVITY.

A PLOY THEY WILL CERTAINLY COME TO REGRET.



SO THEN THE BIG QUESTION-- WHERE *IS* SHE?



"AND...WHAT
IF THIS IS A
TRAP?"



IT IS MOST
DEFINITELY
A TRAP.



WELL, THEN
SHOULDN'T
WE--?

SINCE OUR
RETURN, I'VE UNCOVERED
A TRAIL OF INTERNATIONAL
CONTRABAND VIA A FREIGHTER
BASED OUT OF SHANGHAI--
THE RISING DAWN.

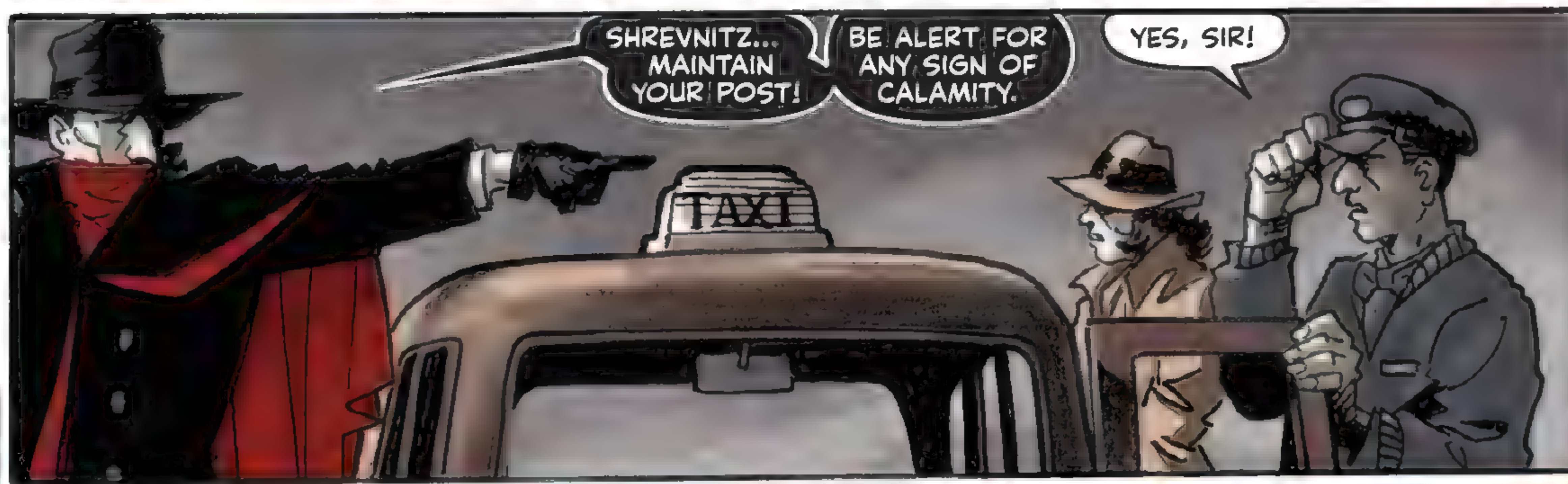


"THE MAJORITY OF THAT SHIP'S
CARGO ORIGINATES HERE--AN
ABANDONED WAREHOUSE SECRETLY
UNDER CONTROL OF THE *HIP SING*."

"ALMOST CERTAINLY...*THIS*
IS WHERE THEY ARE HOLDING
THE CAPTIVE HEIRESS."

"THEN I SHOULD COME
WITH YOU! IN CASE--"

"YOUR TASK IS TO COMFORT
MISS SULLIVAN, WHO WILL
SURELY BE TRAUMATIZED BY
HER ORDEAL."





He was always wary of deploying me into active field work.



At first, I thought this was due to my being a woman. True, I wasn't as battle-hardened as some of his male agents.



But I could certainly take care of myself.

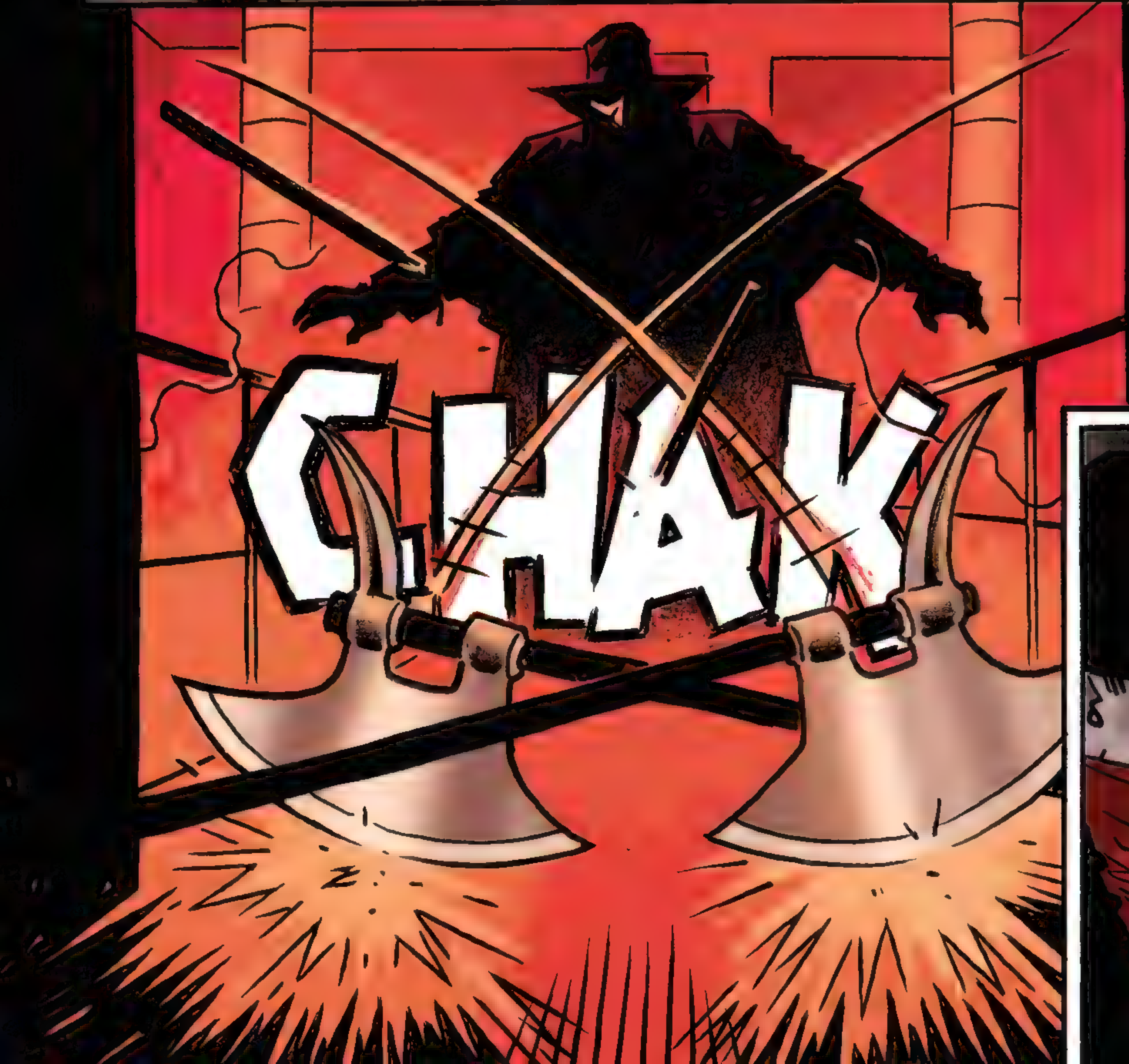




Eventually though, I came to realize it was a result of our intimacy.



A tenderness he would never openly admit.



*MNPH...
NGHN...PH!*





*There were aspects
of his life that I
could never share.*







GREETINGS,
YING KO.

THE
Red
EMPRESS
SENDS HER
REGARDS.



Like any group new to American shores, Chinese immigrants often found criminal enterprise the only path afforded them by a culture that promised equality and opportunity but was in fact steeped in bigotry and exclusion.

Like the Italian and Jewish mobs, the Tong societies soon wielded a ruthless authority that resulted in both power and wealth.

<HOW SADLY PREDICTABLE... MIGHTY **YING KO**-- THE DREADED **SHADOW OF JUDGMENT**-- LURED AND SNARED FOR THE SAKE OF A WORTHLESS ARISTOCRAT!>

<WELL...NOT ENTIRELY SO. NOW THAT THE VAPID **MISS SULLIVAN** HAS SERVED HER ROLE AS LIVING BAIT, I'M SURE HER FAMILY WILL PAY A HEFTY SUM FOR HER RANSOM.>

<SHE WILL BE RETURNED TO THEM... MOSTLY UNHARMED!>

<A FATE DENIED TO YOU, I'M AFRAID.>

哎!

<HUH? LI... WHAT'S WRONG?>

<**FENG!** WHAT HAPPENED?! HE...HE WAS **RIGHT THERE**, IN THE CAGE! JUST A MOMENT AGO!>

<AND NOW... **HE'S GONE!** HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?!>

<RELAX, LI... HE'S STILL THERE. LOOK AGAIN.>

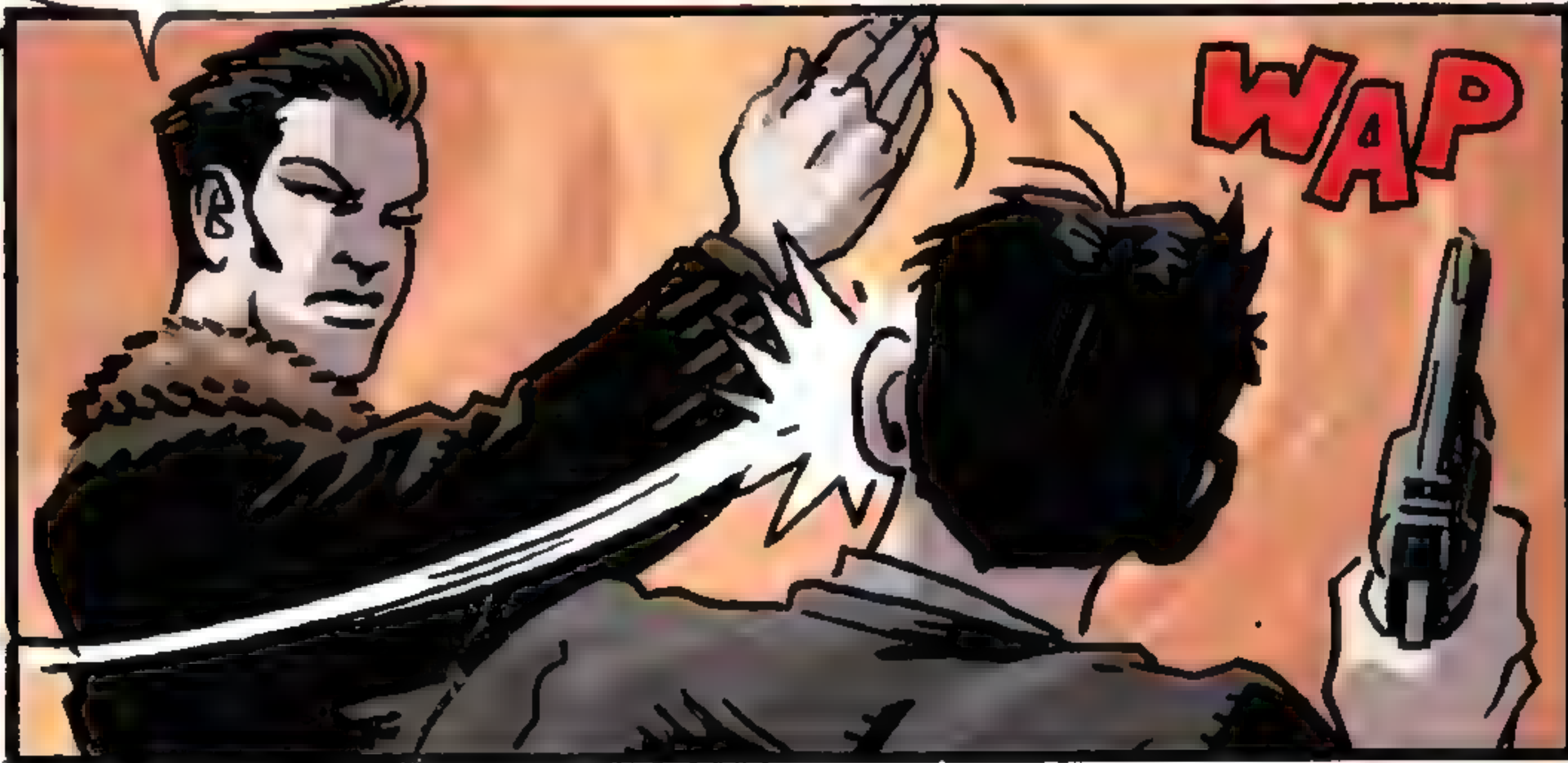


<HE...

I...>

<IDIOT!>

<DON'T LOOK
INTO HIS EYES.>



WAP



<MY EMPRESS
HAS LONGED TO
CELEBRATE THE
DAY OF YOUR
DEATH.>



<YOUR *TULKU* TRICKS
COUNT FOR NOTHING,
YING KO.>



<IT WILL
BE A MOST
MAGNIFICENT
DISPLAY!>



TNT
CAUTION

Countless times, I've sat and waited.
My stomach in knots awaiting his
return from yet another mission
fraught with certain danger.

As per his instructions.
No... as per his *command*.

HOW LONG'S
IT'S BEEN,
SHREVIE?

ONLY TEN MINUTES,
MISS LANE.

AND SO FAR...
NO SIGN OF ANY
TROUBLE.



BUT BY THE
TIME WE NOTICE
ANYTHING...
IT MIGHT BE
TOO LATE!

C'MON NOW,
MISS LANE...
YOU KNOW
THE BOSS.

HE'S WHO
THE BAD GUYS
ARE SCARED OF...
NOT THE OTHER
WAY AROUND!



HO, CABBIE!







«AND YOU KNOW HOW THE CHINESE LIKE TO CELEBRATE, YES?»



«WITH A STRING OF FIRECRACKERS!»

«BIG ONES!»



«YOU DARE NOT SHOOT THRU THE FUSE WITHOUT SETTING OFF THE ENTIRE CHAIN. THERE IS NO ESCAPE.»



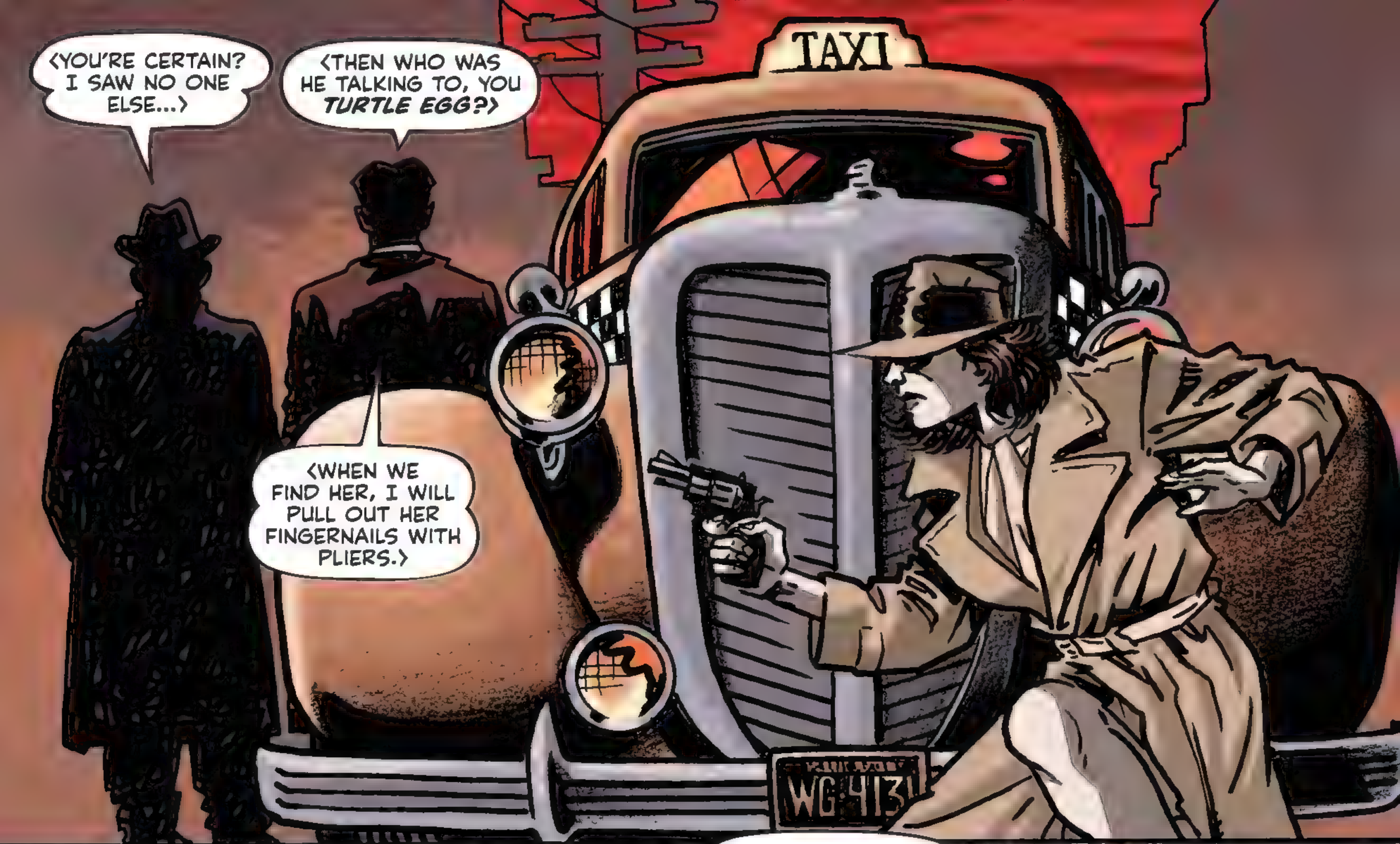
«FAREWELL, YING KO. IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR TO HASTEN YOUR DEMISE!»

«HURRY, FENG!»



«BEFORE THESE TWO IDIOTS LIGHT THAT STRING AND BLOW US ALL TO ATOMS!»







I never know what to say, after moments of sudden and extreme violence. Something pithy. Something stern.

Always seems to work so well for him!



SHREVIE...
ARE YOU OKAY?!
THOSE TWO
WERE OBVIOUSLY
MEMBERS OF THE
HIP SING TONG!
WE'VE GOT TO
CALL THIS IN!

OKAY, I...OHOO, MAN!
★ THEY REALLY
★ CLOCKED ME! ★

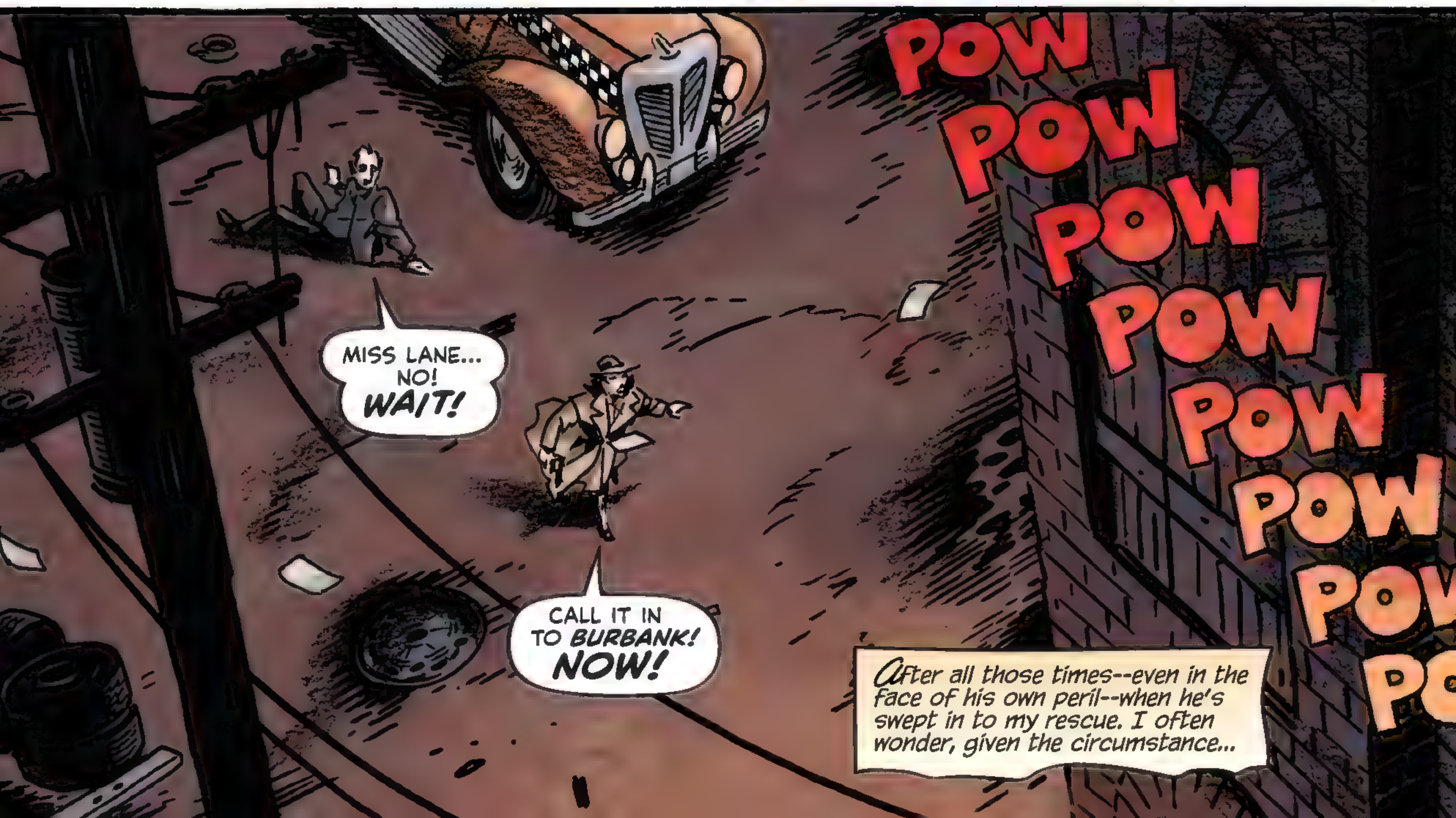


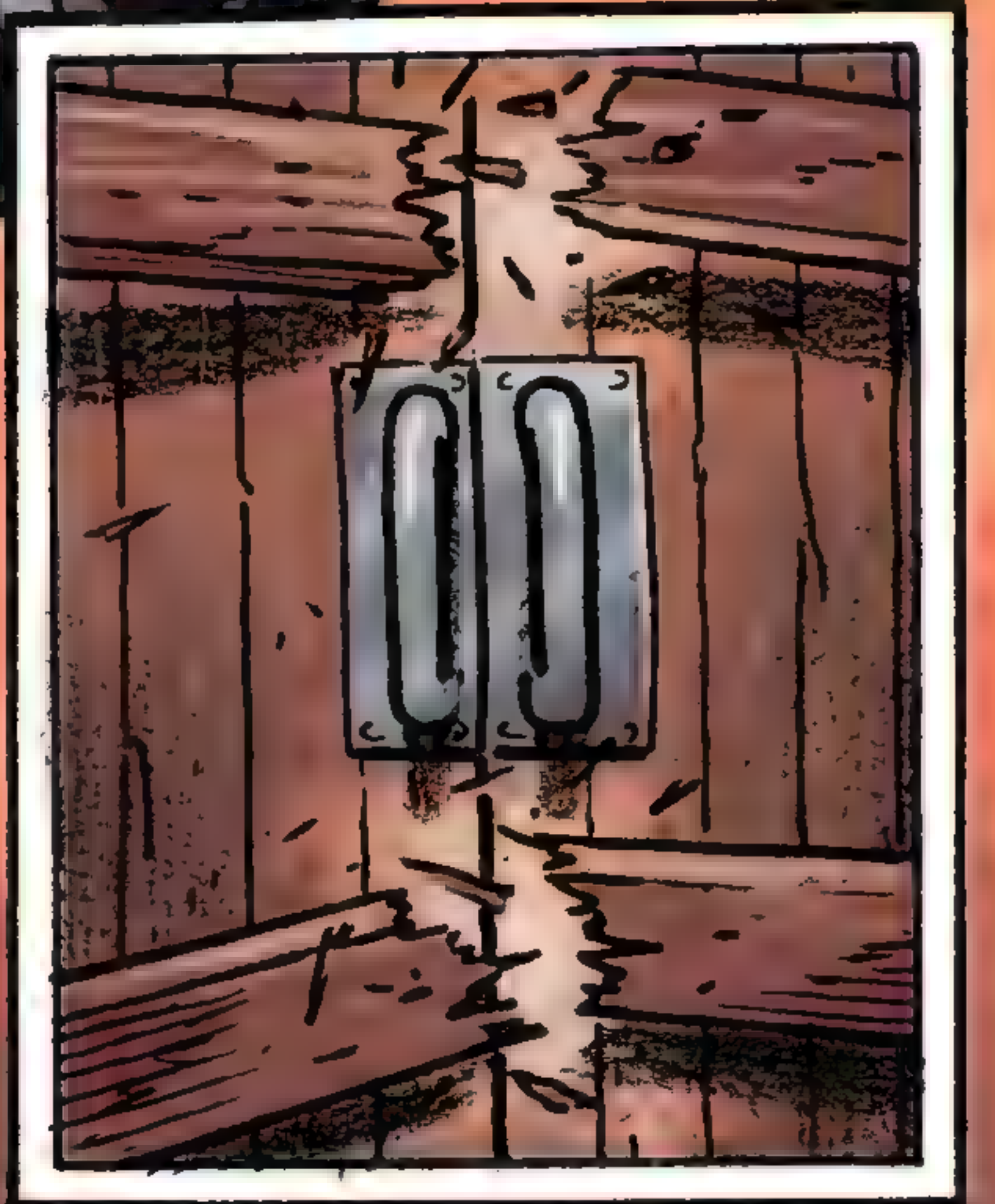
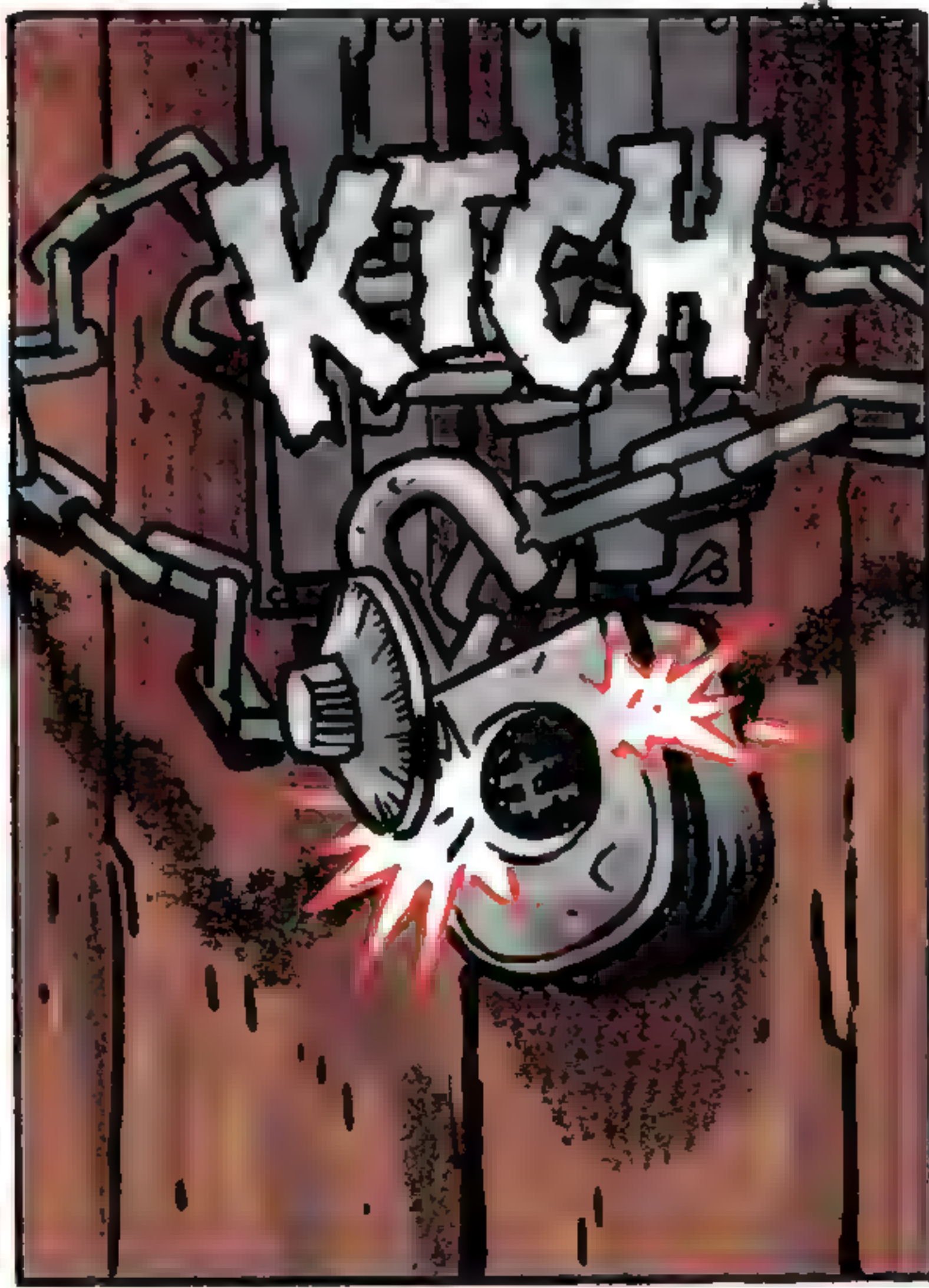
HURRY!
THERE'S BOUND
TO BE MORE--



POW POW POW POW

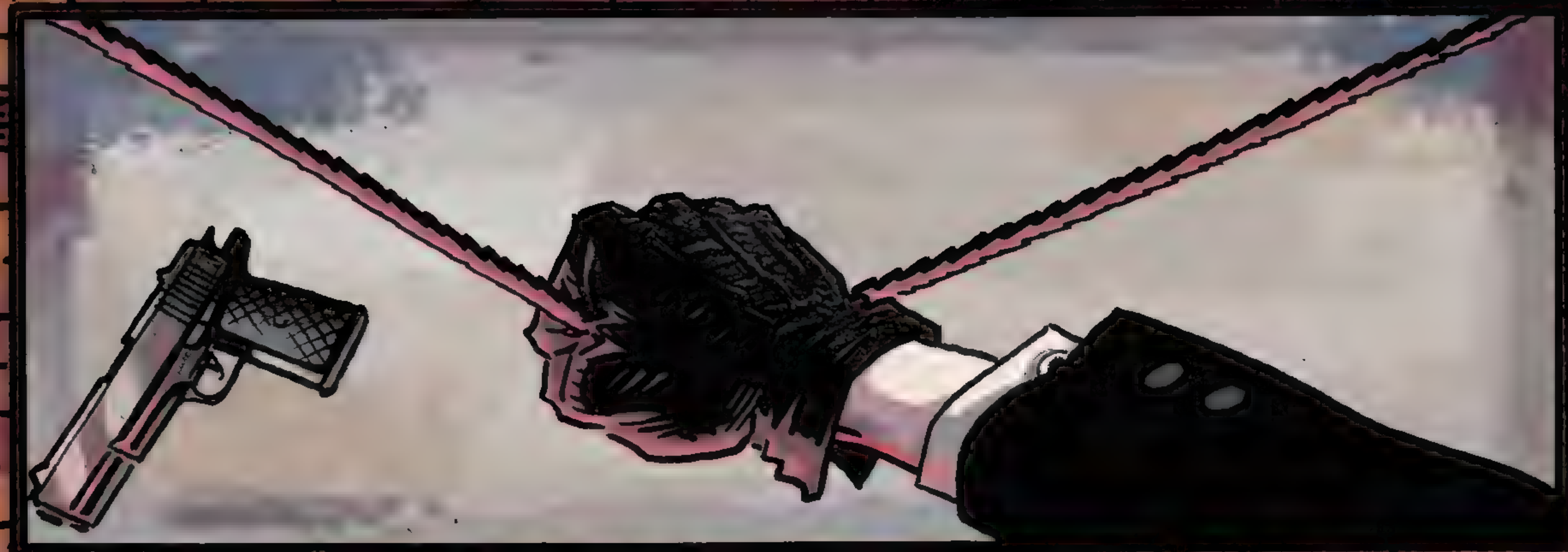
POW POW







POW POW POW POW POW







KABOOM!







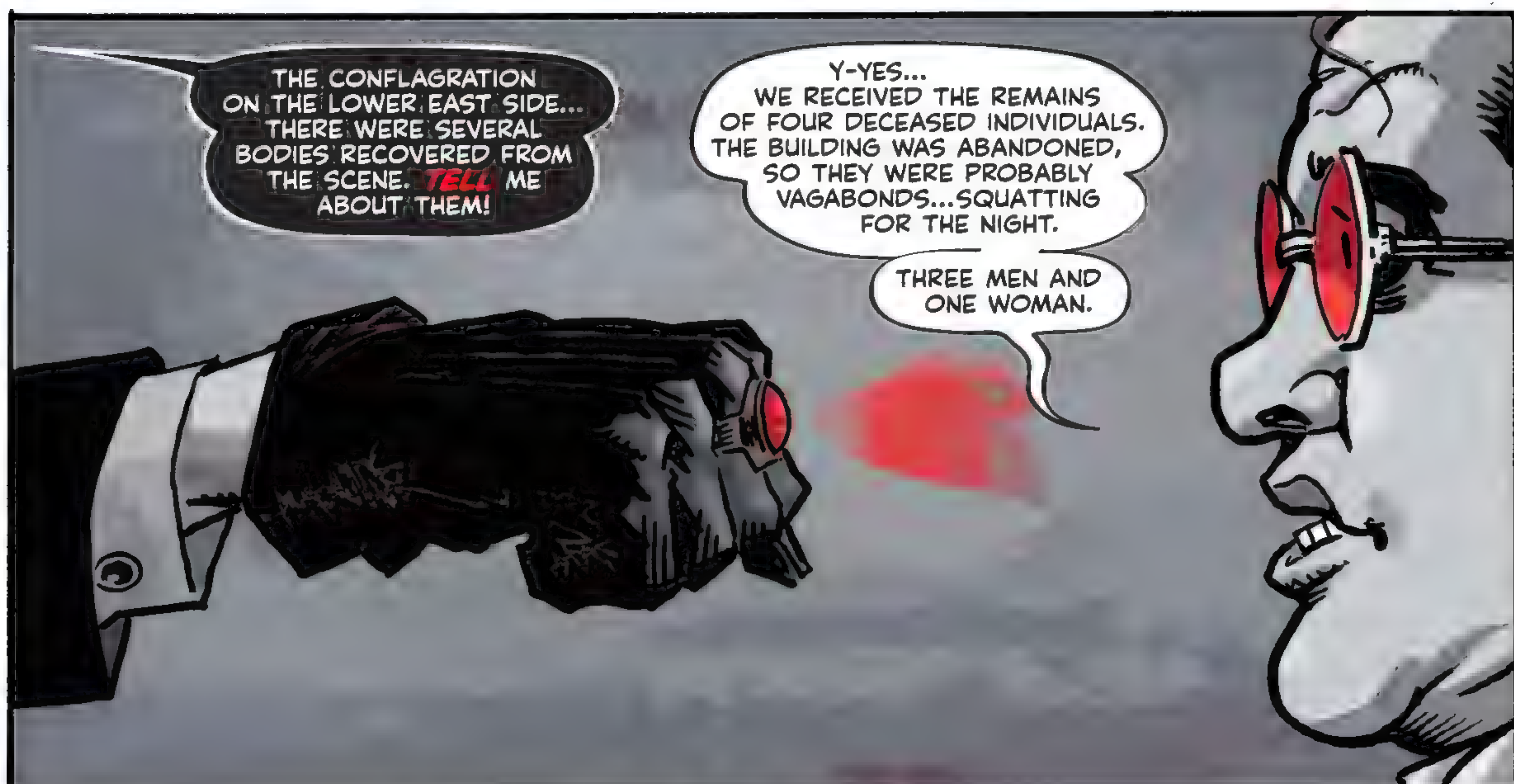


"I DONE SVEEPING, SOR."

CITY MORGUE EST. 1918

"HUH? OH, YEAH... THANKS, FRITZ."





THE CONFLAGRATION
ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE...
THERE WERE SEVERAL
BODIES RECOVERED FROM
THE SCENE. **TELL ME**
ABOUT THEM!

Y-YES...
WE RECEIVED THE REMAINS
OF FOUR DECEASED INDIVIDUALS.
THE BUILDING WAS ABANDONED,
SO THEY WERE PROBABLY
VAGABONDS...SQUATTING
FOR THE NIGHT.

THREE MEN AND
ONE WOMAN.



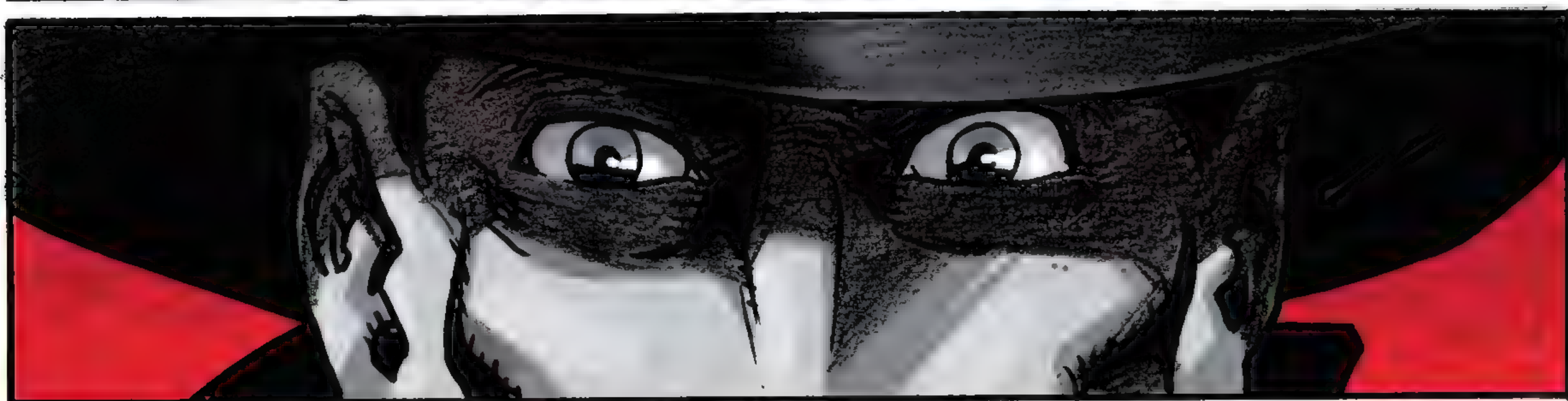
ALL OF THE MEN WERE CRUSHED TO DEATH
BY THE BUILDING'S INNER COLLAPSE. THE...THE
WOMAN SEEMS TO HAVE CAUGHT THE BRUNT OF
THE BLAST AND WAS INCINERATED. HER REMAINS
CAN BE DESCRIBED AS PARTIAL, AT BEST.

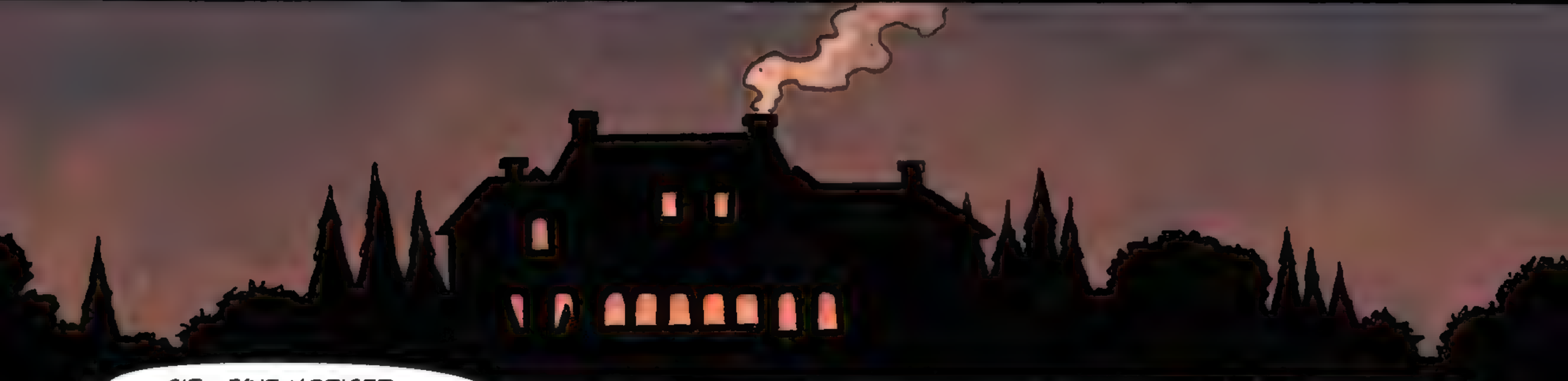
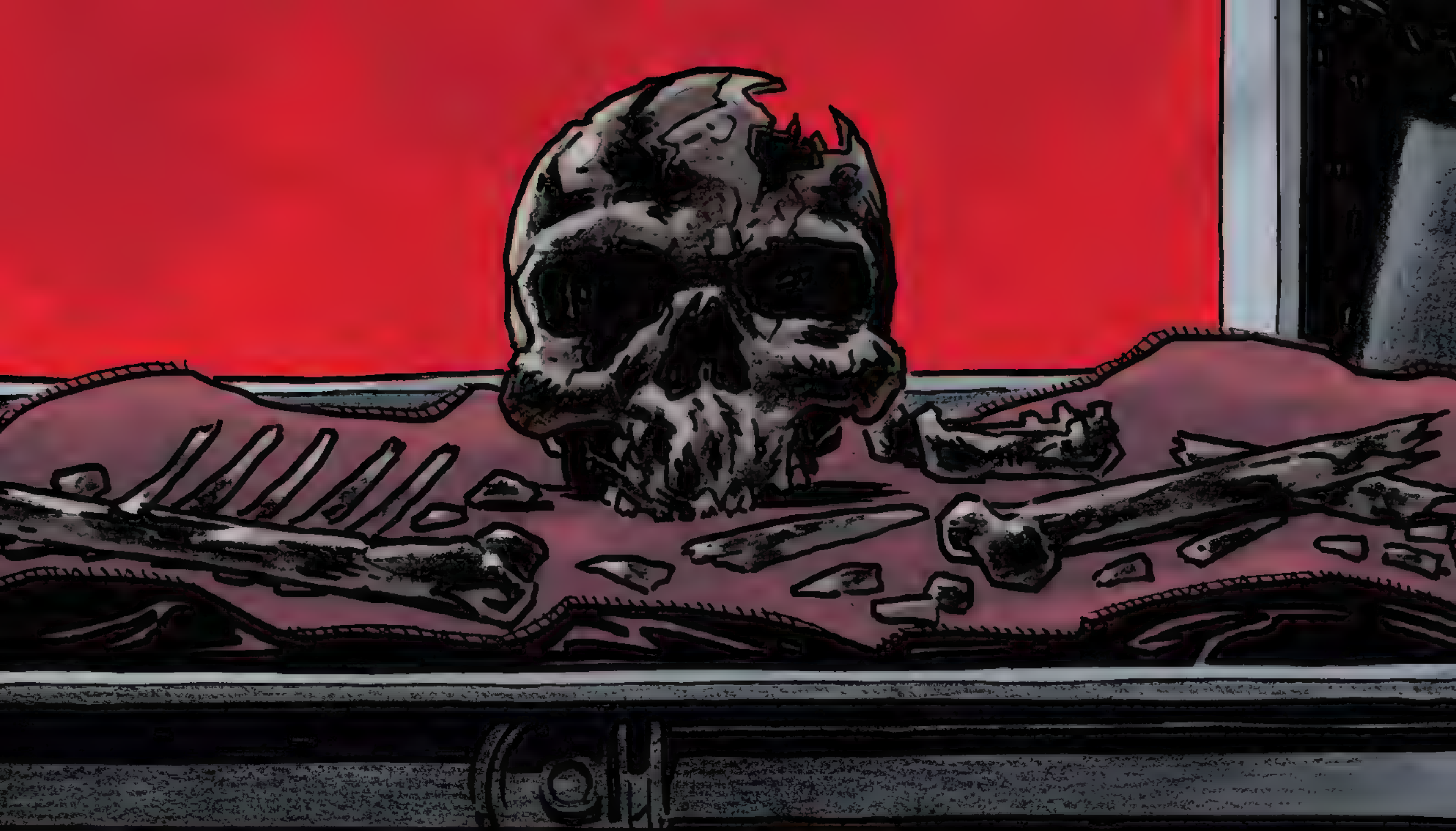


SHOW ME.



MOST OF HER SKELETON
CRUMBLLED IN THE ACT OF
RECOVERY. THERE AREN'T
ENOUGH TEETH REMAINING
FOR AN I.D. VIA DENTAL
RECORDS.





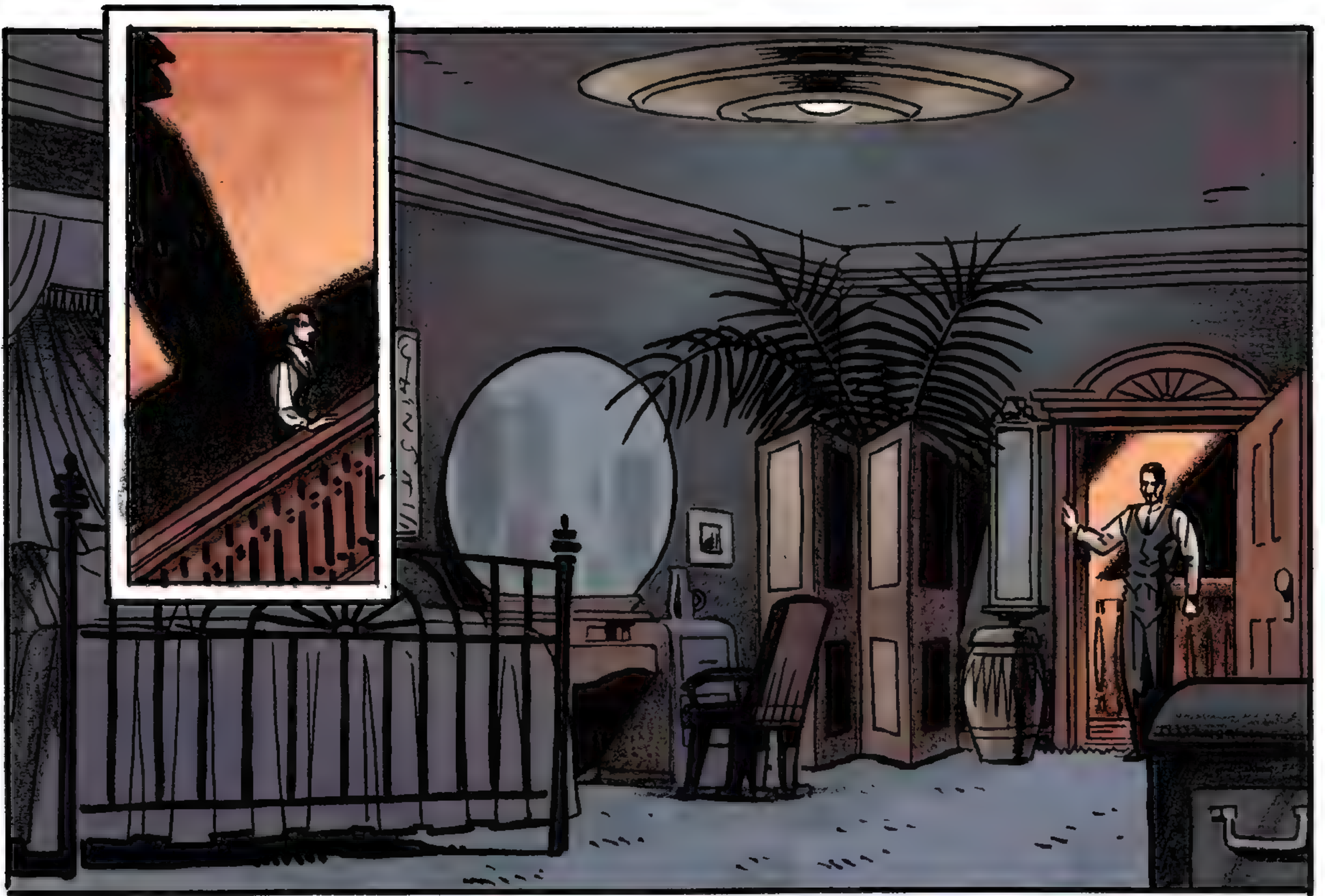
SIR...I'VE NOTICED THAT *MISS LANE* HAS BEEN ABSENT FOR SEVERAL DAYS. THE MAID SAYS HER BED CHAMBER HAS GONE UNUSED.

MIGHT I INQUIRE HOW LONG SHE WILL BE AWAY?

MISS LANE HAS TRAVELED TO... VISIT FAMILY FOR SOME TIME, RICHARDS.

I...CAN'T REALLY SAY *WHEN* SHE MIGHT RETURN.





And so I've decided to pen this chronicle, the private story of the most determined, courageous and fascinating man I've ever met--an unconventional hero who prefers to operate under the cover of darkness.

But beneath that cloak beats the heart of a man. A man whom, I'll admit, I've often found frustrating and infuriating... but also loving and kind, in his own way.

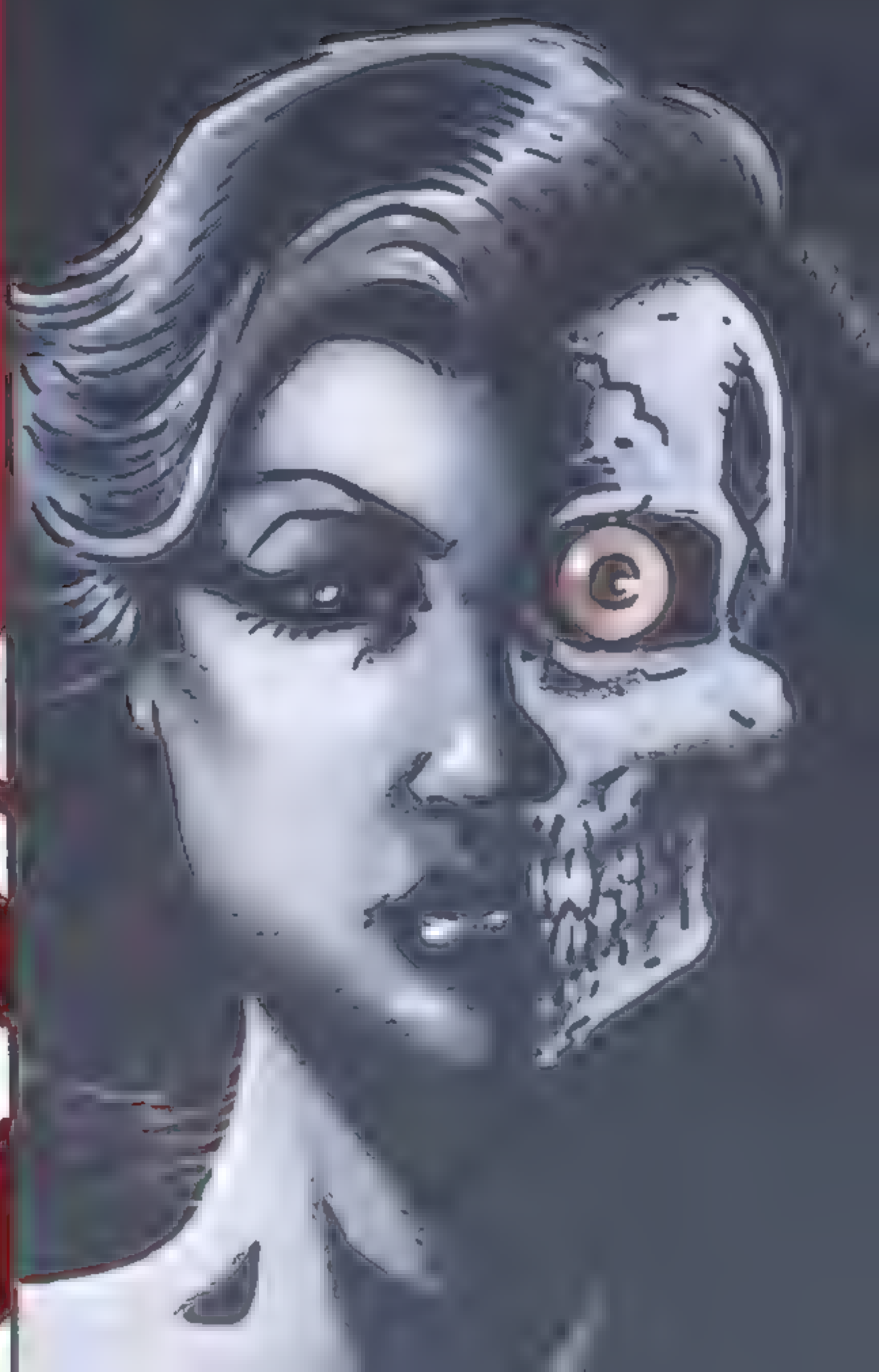
Of course, this was never the path I could have imagined my life would take. Over time, I've come to share the passion of his crusade--the drive and desire to stamp out the bitter "weed of crime".

Even if that effort might some day cost my own life.





3



ANTHONY GENOVESE...
STAND AND ANSWER
FOR YOUR LIFE
OF CRIME!

*In general, he
tended to leave mob
work to the police.*

WHAT IS YOUR
CONNECTION TO THE
HIP-SING TONG AND THEIR
MYSTERIOUS MASTER,
THE RED EMPRESS?

ANSWER! OR FACE THE
JUDGMENT AND WRATH OF...
THE SHADOW!

DON GENOVESE!
STAY BACK!
WHERE THE HELL
IS HE?!

I...THINK
I SEE HIM!
THERE!

NAH.
IT'S...COMIN'
FROM OVER
HERE!

*Instead, focusing his efforts on
the dark and macabre--psychopaths,
masterminds and agents of mass
destruction.*



BANG BANG BANG





SO...
WAS THAT REALLY
NECESSARY?

WE COULDN'T
DISCUSS THIS LIKE
CIVILIZED MEN?
I SIT DOWN WITH
MY ENEMIES ALL
THE TIME...

BUT NO...Y'JUST COST
ME THREE OF MY BEST GUYS.
THEY DIED PROTECTING ME
SO NOW I'VE GOTTA LOOK
AFTER THEIR FAMILIES.



CHRIST!
THAT ONE IN
THE MIDDLE IS MY
SISTER'S KID!

GONNA
COST ME
A FORTUNE TO
SMOOTH HER
FEATHERS!



I AIN'T NEVER HEARD OF NO FREAKIN'
RED EMPRESS. I DO DO SOME
DISTRIBUTION WITH THE *HIP SINGS*.


BUT I'M MERELY
PROVIDIN' A NEEDED
SERVICE, Y'SEE?
I'M JUST A MAN
OF BUSINESS.



I AIN'T SOME GODDAMN
SAVAGE LIKE THEM SLANTS
OR THE SHINES UP
IN HARLEM.



CRIME IS
AN INSIDIOUS
WEED...



CHE CAZZO?!

IT RECOGNIZES
NEITHER RACE NOR
SEX NOR CLASS!

AND ALL WHO
TASTE ITS BITTER FRUIT
ARE TAINTED BY THE SEEDS
OF IGNORANCE AND BRUTALITY.
YOUR SOUL IS AS DIRTY AS
YOUR HANDS, GENOVESE.

IN YOUR CASE...
BLACK AS THE
DEEPEST PIT!

I HAVEN'T
THE TIME OR THE
PATIENCE FOR
YOUR CHICANERY,
FELON!

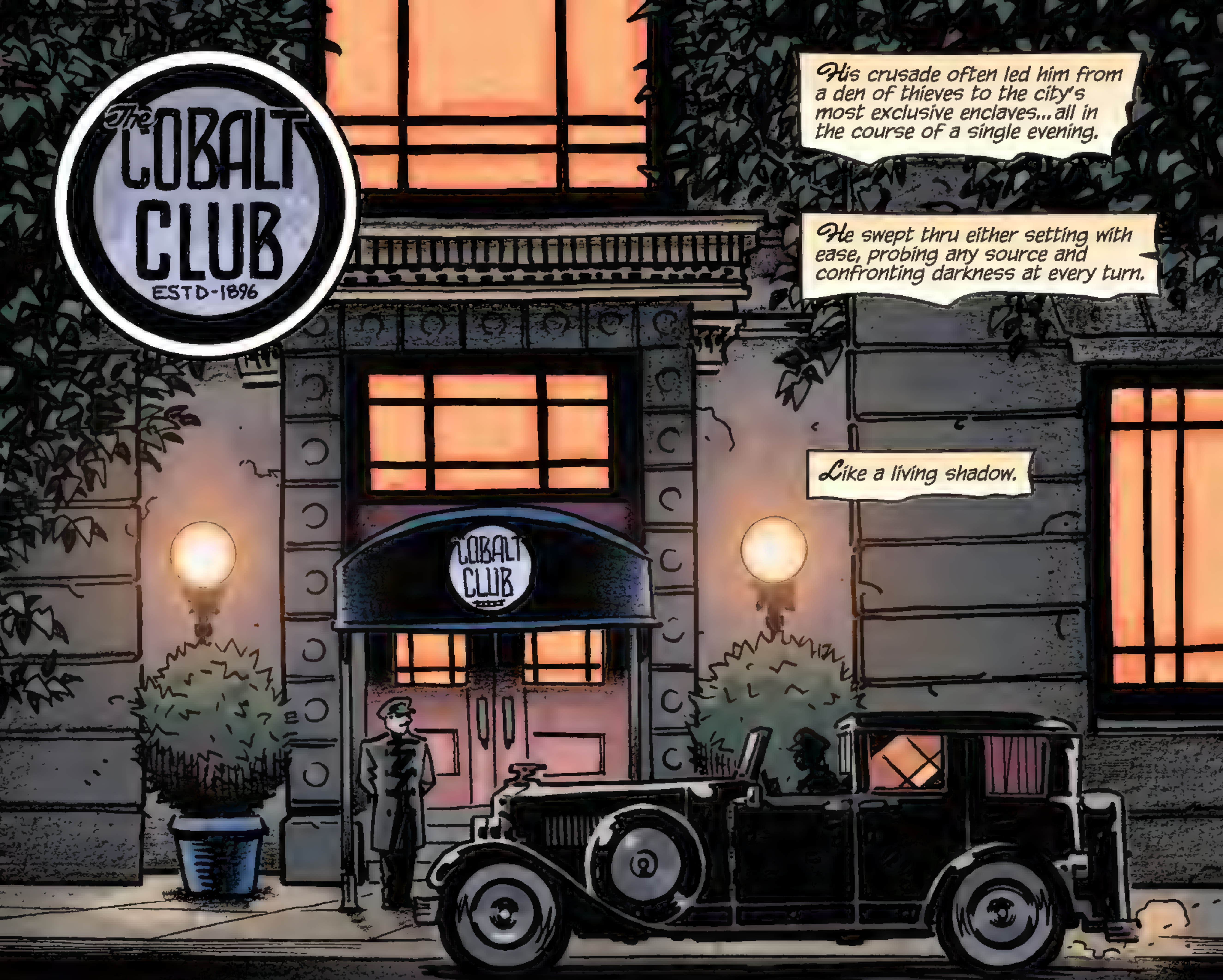




His crusade often led him from a den of thieves to the city's most exclusive enclaves... all in the course of a single evening.

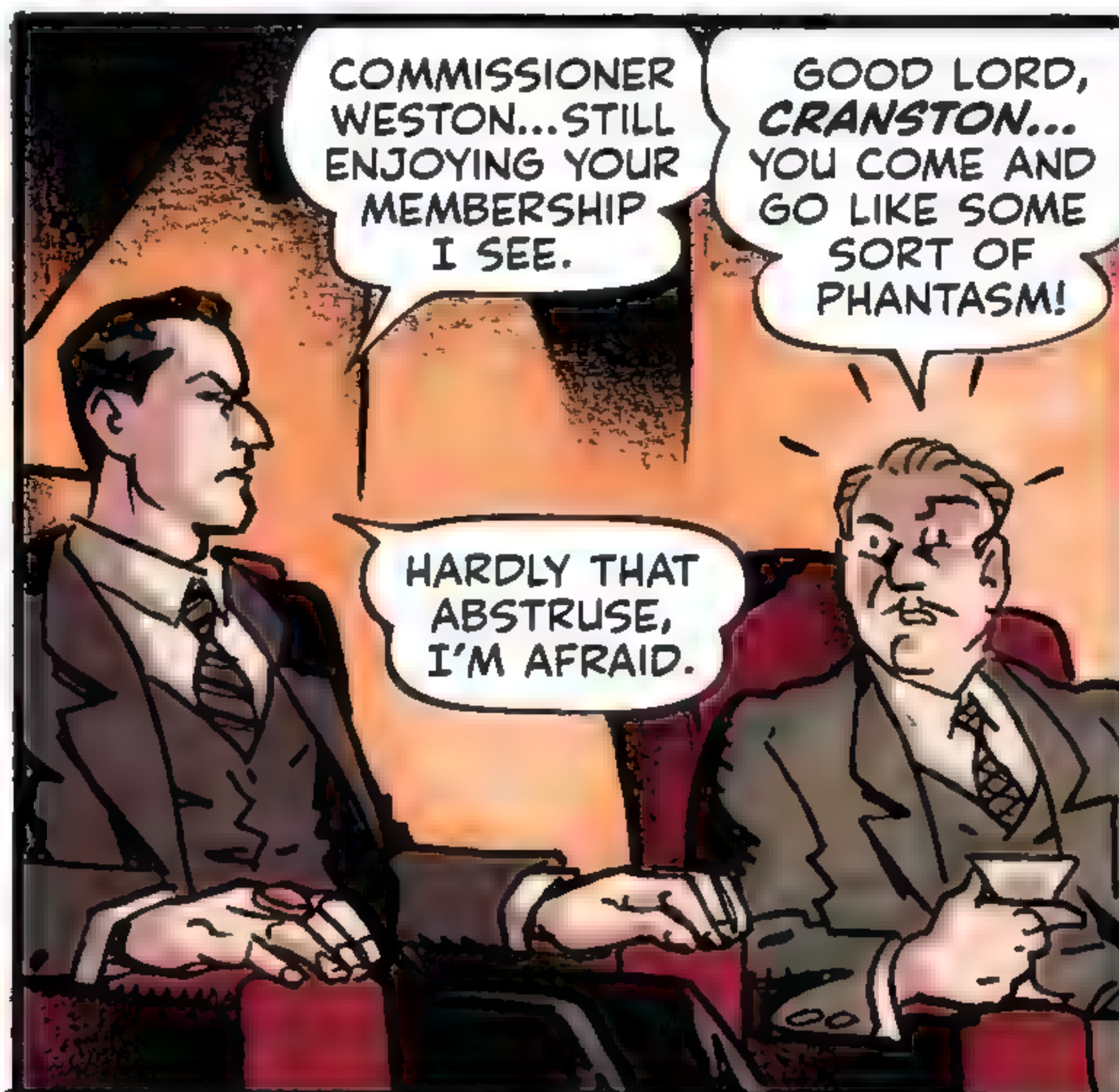
He swept thru either setting with ease, probing any source and confronting darkness at every turn.

Like a living shadow.



WAITER!
EXCUSE ME--?

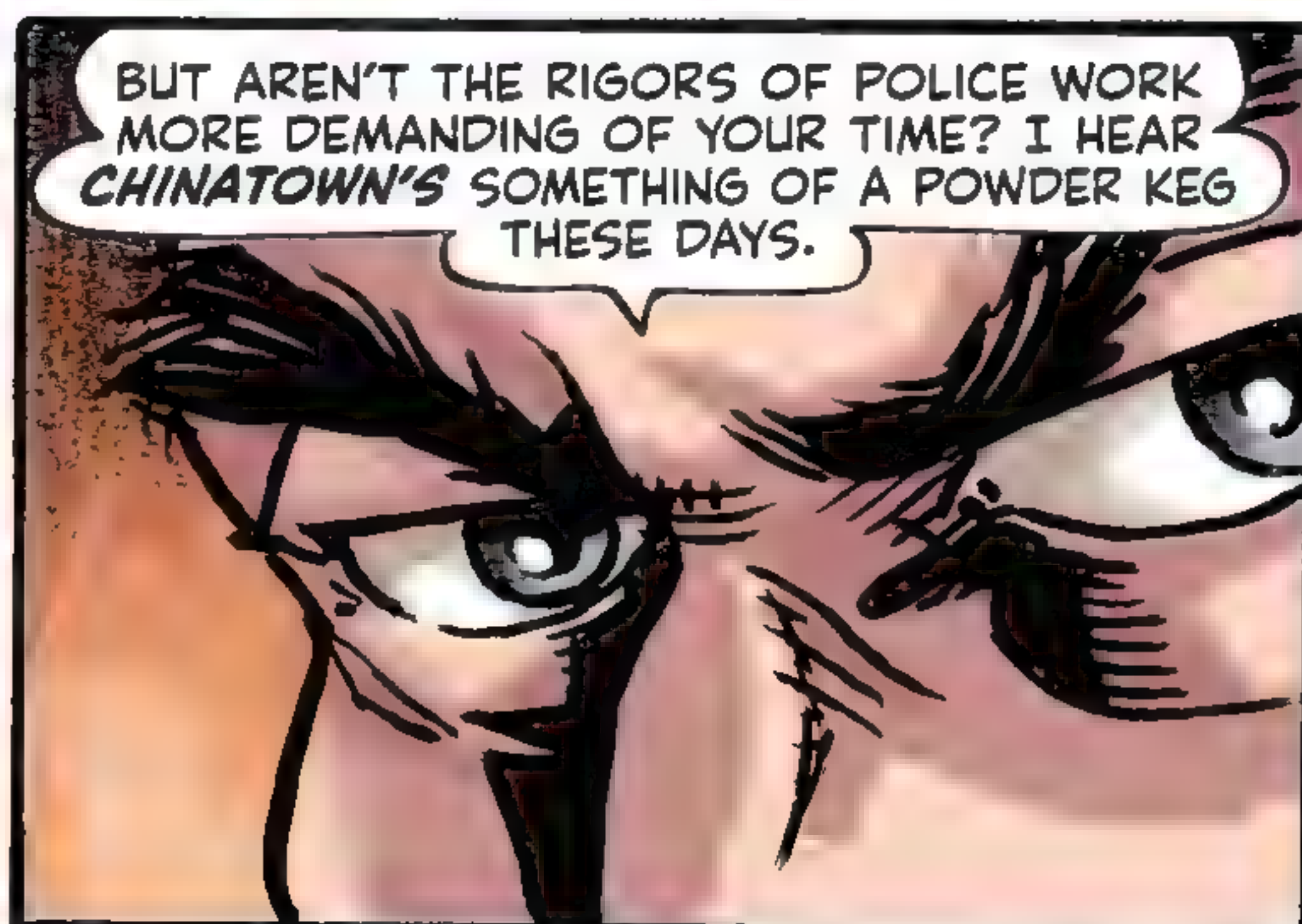
GOOD HEAVENS,
WHAT DOES IT TAKE
TO GET SOME SERVICE
IN THIS CLUB?!
WAITER..?!



COMMISSIONER
WESTON... STILL
ENJOYING YOUR
MEMBERSHIP
I SEE.

GOOD LORD,
CRANSTON...
YOU COME AND
GO LIKE SOME
SORT OF
PHANTASM!

HARDLY THAT
ABSTRUSE,
I'M AFRAID.



BUT AREN'T THE RIGORS OF POLICE WORK
MORE DEMANDING OF YOUR TIME? I HEAR
CHINATOWN'S SOMETHING OF A POWDER KEG
THESE DAYS.





SAINTS ALIVE,
WHAT'S GOT YOU SO
PECKISH TONIGHT?

AND WHERE HAVE
YOU BEEN? THIS IS THE FIRST
I'VE SEEN YOU HERE IN MONTHS!
AND, IF I MAY BE SO BOLD...

...YOU'RE LOOKING
A BIT PEAKED AND GRIM.
EVEN FOR YOU.



I'VE...
BEEN BUSY.

INEXORABLY
SO.



YES, WELL...YOU
WON'T SEE ANY
POLICE CRACK-
DOWNS SO LONG
AS THE MAYOR'S
TRYING TO PLAY
NICE WITH THESE
PEOPLE.



TOO HARD FOR A
RAIDING SQUAD TO TELL
THE GOOD ONES FROM
THE BAD ONES.

GOD FORBID,
WE END UP
ACCIDENTALLY SHOOTING
A COMMUNITY LEADER
OF SOME SORT!



PFFT...
THE PRESS
WOULD NEVER
LET US HEAR
THE END OF
THAT!



GOOD LORD...
NOW HE'S GONE
AGAIN! AND I'M
STILL WITHOUT
A DRINK...



WAITER!

Chinatown—

--since his earliest cases in New York, that exotic world-within-a-world often played a crucial role in his crusade. For both better and worse.

Ironic, considering it was in the Far East that he first learned his shadowy talents.

He had infiltrated the secret side of this insular society many times.

Often with the aid of his wide network of covert agents.

YI ZHANG
SEAFOOD
MARKET
魚貨市場

大發財
GOLDEN
LOTUS
RESTAURANT

上海飯店
SHANGHAI HOTEL

上海飯店
SHANGHAI HOTEL

上海飯店
SHANGHAI HOTEL

上海飯店
SHANGHAI HOTEL

SHANGHAI
CAFE

SO SHE ASKS
ME IF I'VE GOT
ANY PLANS FOR
THE FUTURE!

HA!
UH-OH...

TONIGHT
FAR
EAST
THE VILL

Some strongholds
were easier breached
than others.

SO I SAID, "YOU MEAN
TEN YEARS FROM NOW...
OR JUST TONIGHT?"

AND SHE SAYS...
"I WAS ONLY THINKING
OF THE NEXT HOUR
OR SO."

YOU
SERIOUS..?!

TONIGHT
FAR
EAST
REVUE

SWEAR TO GOD, JER.
THIS GAL KNEW WHAT SHE WANTED...
AND THAT WAS THAT!

WELL...
FOR AN HOUR.
TWO,
ACTUALLY.

EVENING,
GENTLEMEN.
COLOREDS
IN BACK.

WHAT...
SERIOUSLY?

YOU MEAN YOU DON'T
ALLOW NEGROES...
IN A CHINESE
NIGHTCLUB?

NO...
HE COME IN.
BACK DOOR
ONLY.

HOUSE POLICY.
I DON'T MAKE
RULES.

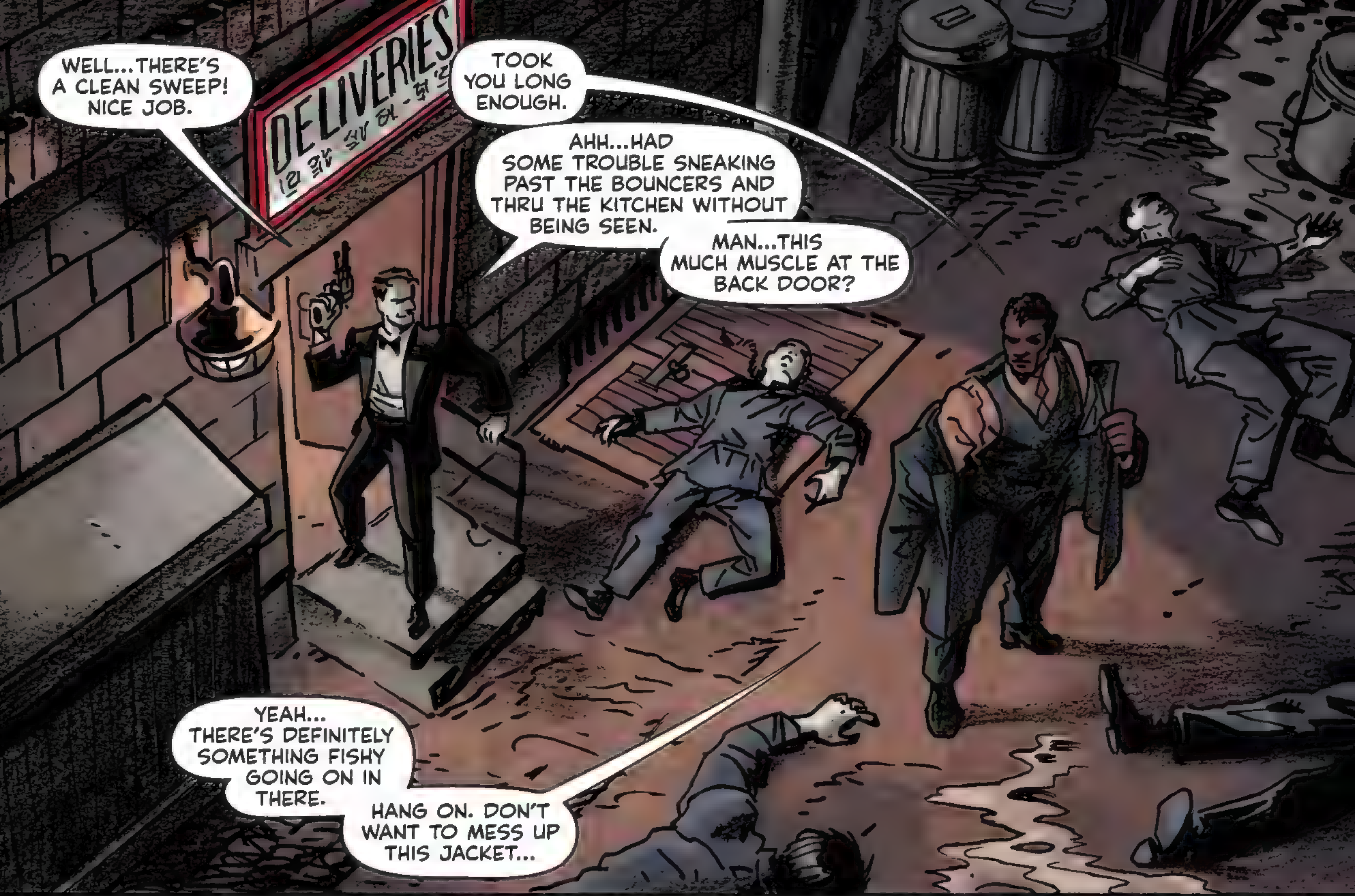
NOW, THAT'S
JUST PLAIN--

NAW...
DON'T.

AWWW...C'MON,
JERICO!

IT'S FINE, HARRY.
AIN'T WORTH
FIGHTIN' ABOUT.

I'LL JUST
SEE YOU
INSIDE.



WELL...THERE'S
A CLEAN SWEEP!
NICE JOB.

TOOK
YOU LONG
ENOUGH.

AHH...HAD
SOME TROUBLE SNEAKING
PAST THE BOUNCERS AND
THRU THE KITCHEN WITHOUT
BEING SEEN.

MAN...THIS
MUCH MUSCLE AT THE
BACK DOOR?

YEAH...
THERE'S DEFINITELY
SOMETHING FISHY
GOING ON IN
THERE.

HANG ON. DON'T
WANT TO MESS UP
THIS JACKET...



HEY...
HAVE YOU NOTICED
THAT THE BOSS SEEMS
EVEN MORE INTENSE
THAN USUAL LATELY?
EVER SINCE...

KNOW
WHATCHA MEAN...
AND, YEAH,
I KNOW
SINCE WHEN.



HOPE HE'S GOT
THIS ONE PLANNED
TIGHT, AS PER USUAL.
CAUSE, 'ROUND HERE?
WE *DEFINITELY* DON'T
LOOK THE PART!

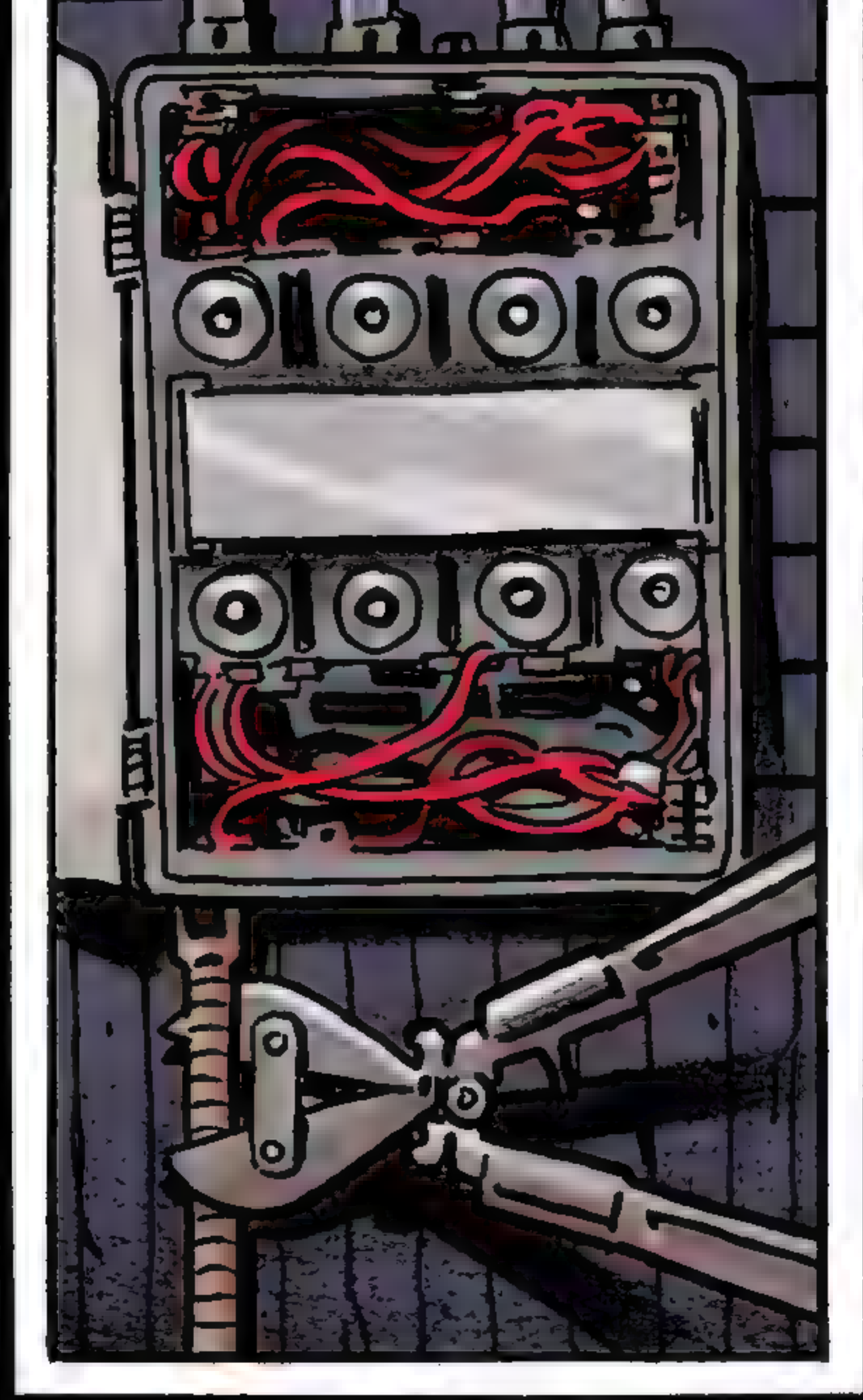
YEAH...
YOU SAID IT!

STILL...
HE'S NEVER
FAILED YET.



THAT WE
KNOW OF.

HERE'S HOPING
MYRA COMES THRU
WITH HER PART...



KZZT

SAY...
WHAT GIVES?

闹花灯!

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
THE LIGHTS?!

怎么了?

WHICH
WAY OUT?!

IS THIS
PART OF THE
SHOW?

灯光?

嘿!

WATCHIT,
BUSTER!

<GREETINGS, NIU.
GREETINGS, LEI.>

<THERE HAS BEEN
A BLACKOUT AND
THE BOSS IS WORRIED
ABOUT THE SAFE IN
HIS OFFICE. HE WANTS
YOU TWO TO COME
PROTECT IT!>

<I WILL STAND
WATCH AT THE
TUNNELS'
ENTRANCE.>

<FOOLISH
WOMAN!
I NEARLY
SHOT YOU!>

<AND...
IT'S DARK.>




«HERE...
TAKE THIS LANTERN.
I AM UNAFRAID OF
THE SHADOWS.»

«THANK YOU,
MING DWAN.»



«HURRY UP.»

«HOLD THAT
LANTERN
HIGHER!»



OKAY...
THEY'RE GONE!
DOWN HERE!



SERIOUSLY?

YOU GUYS
REALLY DIDN'T
BRING FLASH-
LIGHTS?

ACTUALLY,
UM... NO.



«SIGH»
MEN.

HERE...
I BROUGHT
EXTRAS.

THIS BETTER
GO SMOOTHLY.
IT'S TAKEN ME
WEEKS TO GAIN
ACCESS TO THESE
LOWER LEVELS...
AND NOW THAT
COVER'LL BE
BLOWN!




DON'T WORRY,
YOU TWO!

THE BOSS KNOWS WHAT
HE'S DOING.

WHAT'S
HE HOPING
TO FIND?

WE SEEK THE
LAIR OF A SNAKE,
MISS RELDON.



A VIPER THAT
HAS PROVEN AS
DEADLY AS IT
IS ELUSIVE!

THE SECRET
MASTERMIND OF
THIS SERPENTINE TONG
IS KNOWN AS THE
RED EMPRESS.

WE WILL
BRING HER TO
JUSTICE.

OUR
ORDERS?

HARRY VINCENT
AND JERICHO DRUKE,
RECONNOITER THE
SECRET TUNNELS.

I WILL
ACCOMPANY YOU...
BUT REMAIN
UNSEEN.

MYRA RELDON,
YOU WILL STAY AND
GUARD THIS EXIT.

WHAT?!



BUT, SIR...
I--

DO NOT
QUESTION
MY DIRECTIVES,
MISS RELDON.
I WON'T SEE
ANOTH--

WE...

...NEED THIS
EXIT TO REMAIN
SECURE.



SIR...
I TAKE IT WE'LL
MEET RESISTANCE
DOWN THERE?

UNDOUBTEDLY.



AND HOW
SHOULD WE
DEAL WITH
THAT?



MEET ANY
HOSTILE
RESPONSE...
WITH DEADLY
FORCE.



HUH...
THIS SECTION'S
STILL GOT
POWER!

YEAH. MUST
HAVE THEIR OWN
GENERATORS...





<YOU IDIOTS!
GET OUT OF
THE WAY!>

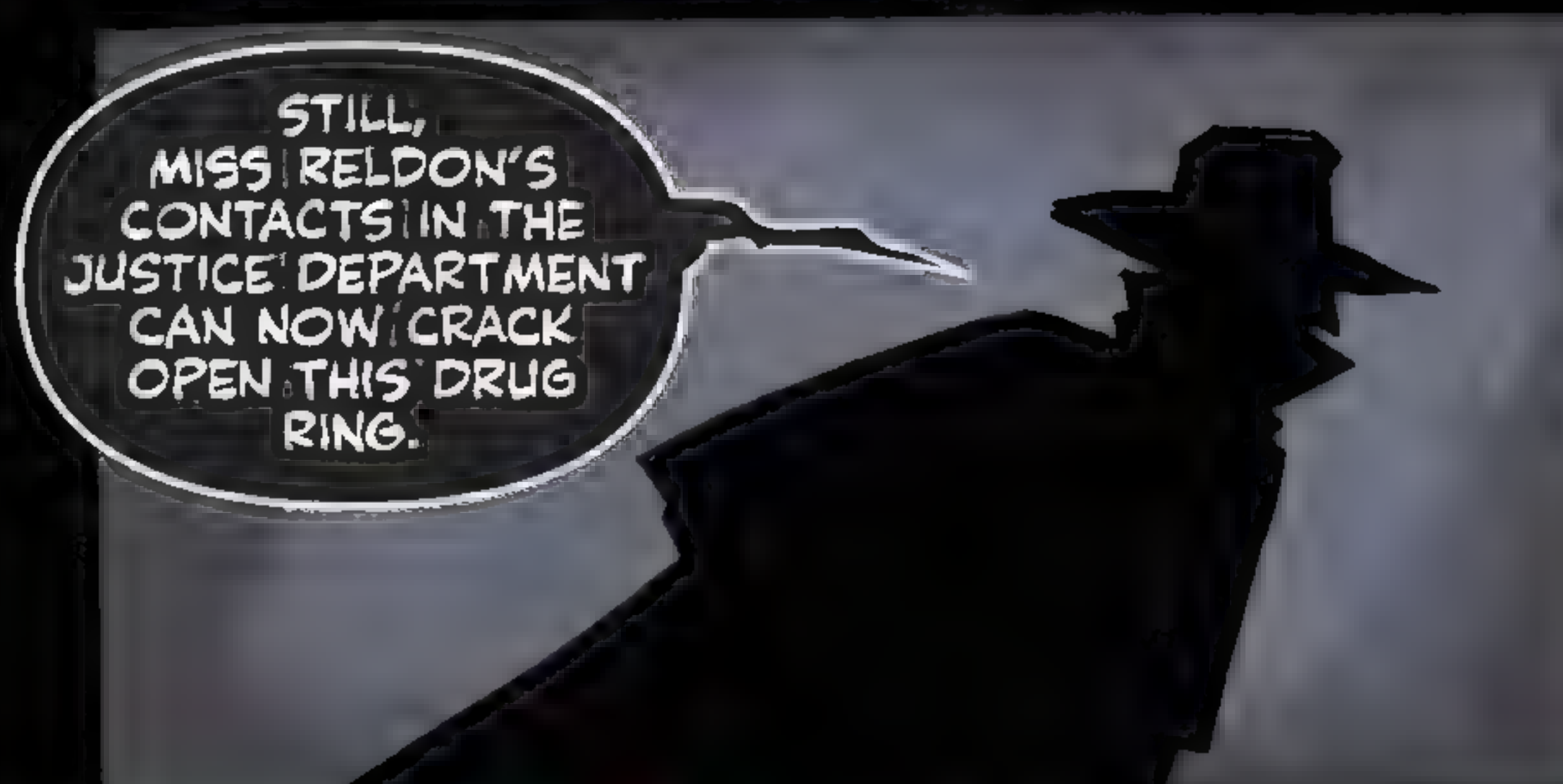
<I CAN'T
GET A CLEAR
SHOT!
I NEED-->













4





ROY?

FOR
DINNER...

...DO YOU
PREFER CANNED
SOUP OR LEFTOVER
CHICKEN?



HM.

*<I PREFER
SZECHUAN BEEF
WITH FRIED
RICE.>*



SOUP OR
CHICKEN?

SOUP.



HOW ABOUT
DESSERT?
I'VE GOT
THOSE NICE
LEMON
COOKIES
FROM THE
DELI...

ROY?



DIDN'T
YOU
HEAR M--
OH!

I'M SORRY,
DEAR.
WE...HAVE A
VISITOR.

MADAM...
I APOLOGIZE FOR
DISRUPTING BOTH
YOUR DINNER HOUR AND
THE PRIVACY OF
YOUR HOME.

BUT I FIND MYSELF
IN URGENT NEED OF
YOUR HUSBAND'S WISE
AND WELL-CONSIDERED
COUNSEL.

*Among his vast network of
operatives, Dr. Roy Tam was the
one agent he considered more like a
friend. Even to the point of unveiling
his identity as Lamont Cranston.*

*Of course, Dr. Tam realized that
this too was merely a disguise
for the man of many shadows.*



WELL THEN...
WHY DON'T I
BRING SOME TEA
FOR YOU AND
YOUR GUEST?

THAT
WOULD
BE LOVELY,
DEAR.





THANK YOU,
DR. TAM...

ROY.

PLEASE...
MY STUDY IS
THIS WAY. WE CAN
TALK THERE.

YOU APPEAR
ANXIOUS. WHAT
SEEMS TO BE THE
PROBLEM?

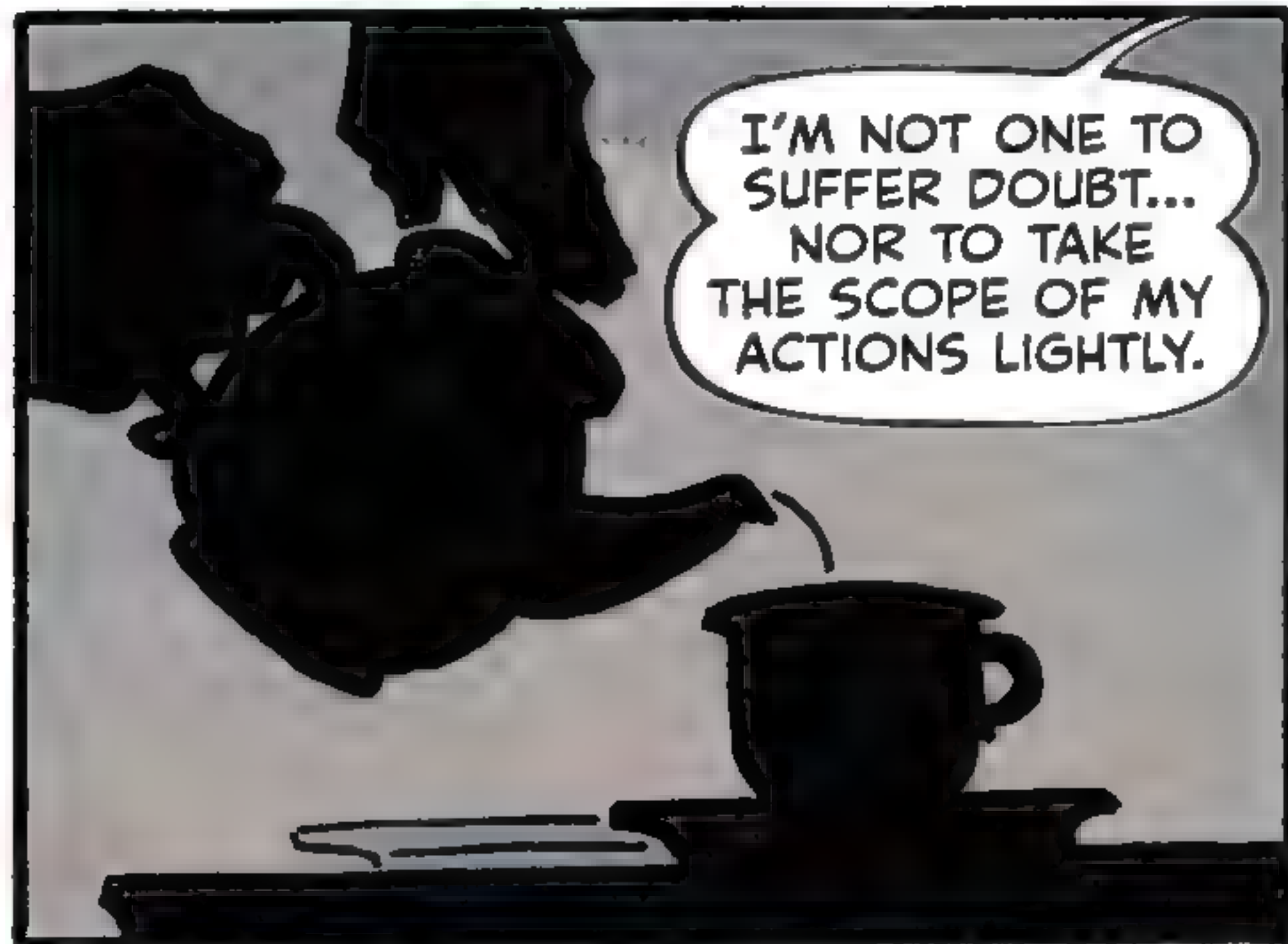


I...HAVE CONCERNS.
ABOUT MY EFFICACY.
AND THE CLARITY OF MY
MENTAL FOCUS.

HM.

YOU KNOW
I'M A GENERAL
PRACTITIONER.

MY INTEREST IN
PSYCHOLOGY IS MERELY
A HOBBY. STILL...SIT AND
LET'S DISCUSS THIS
FURTHER.



I'M NOT ONE TO
SUFFER DOUBT...
NOR TO TAKE
THE SCOPE OF MY
ACTIONS LIGHTLY.



YET OF
LATE, I'VE FELT...
UNTETHERED.

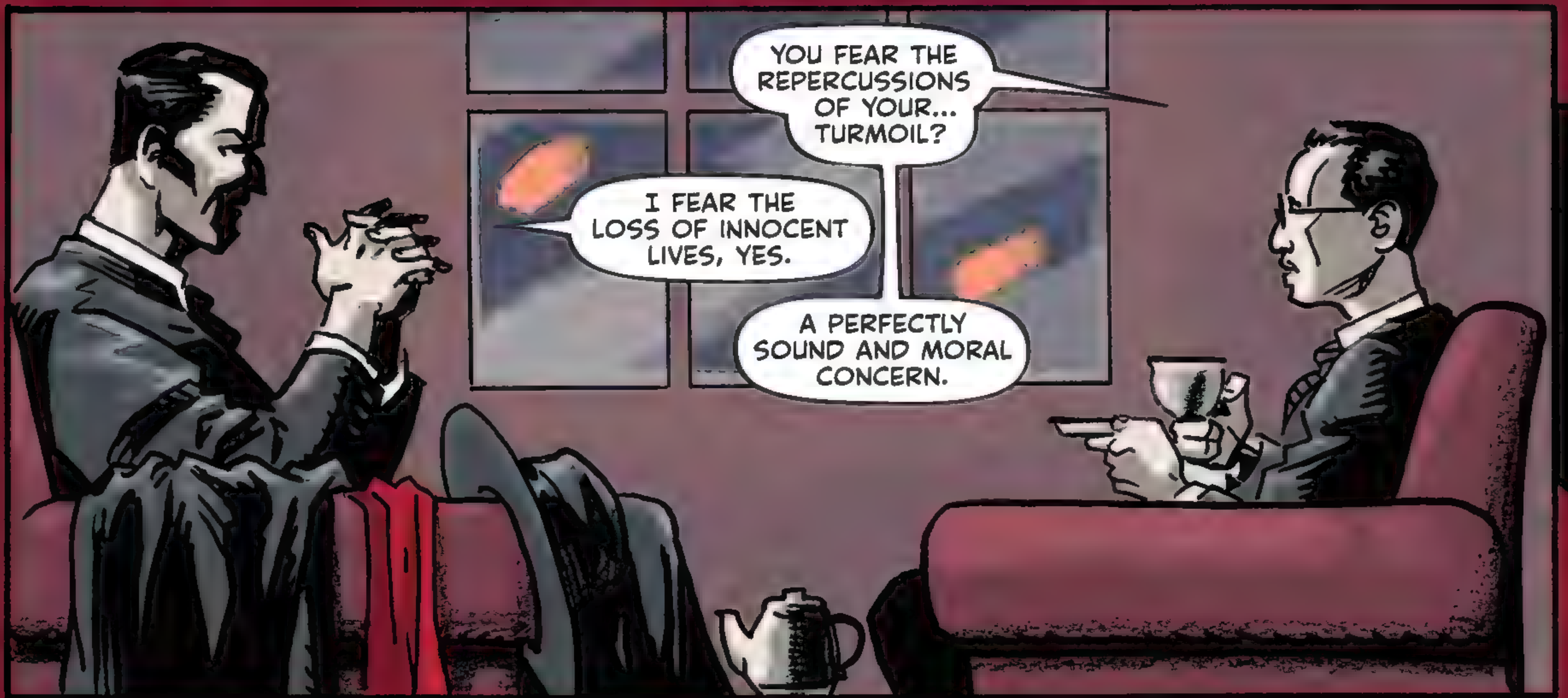


AND SUBJECT
TO FOUL EMOTIONS
I'D LONG SINCE
THOUGHT BURIED.

BUT I AM A
COMMANDER IN A WAR.
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO
RISK THEIR VERY LIVES
UNDER MY AUTHORITY.



I CAN NOT
ABIDE SUCH
DISTRACTIONS.



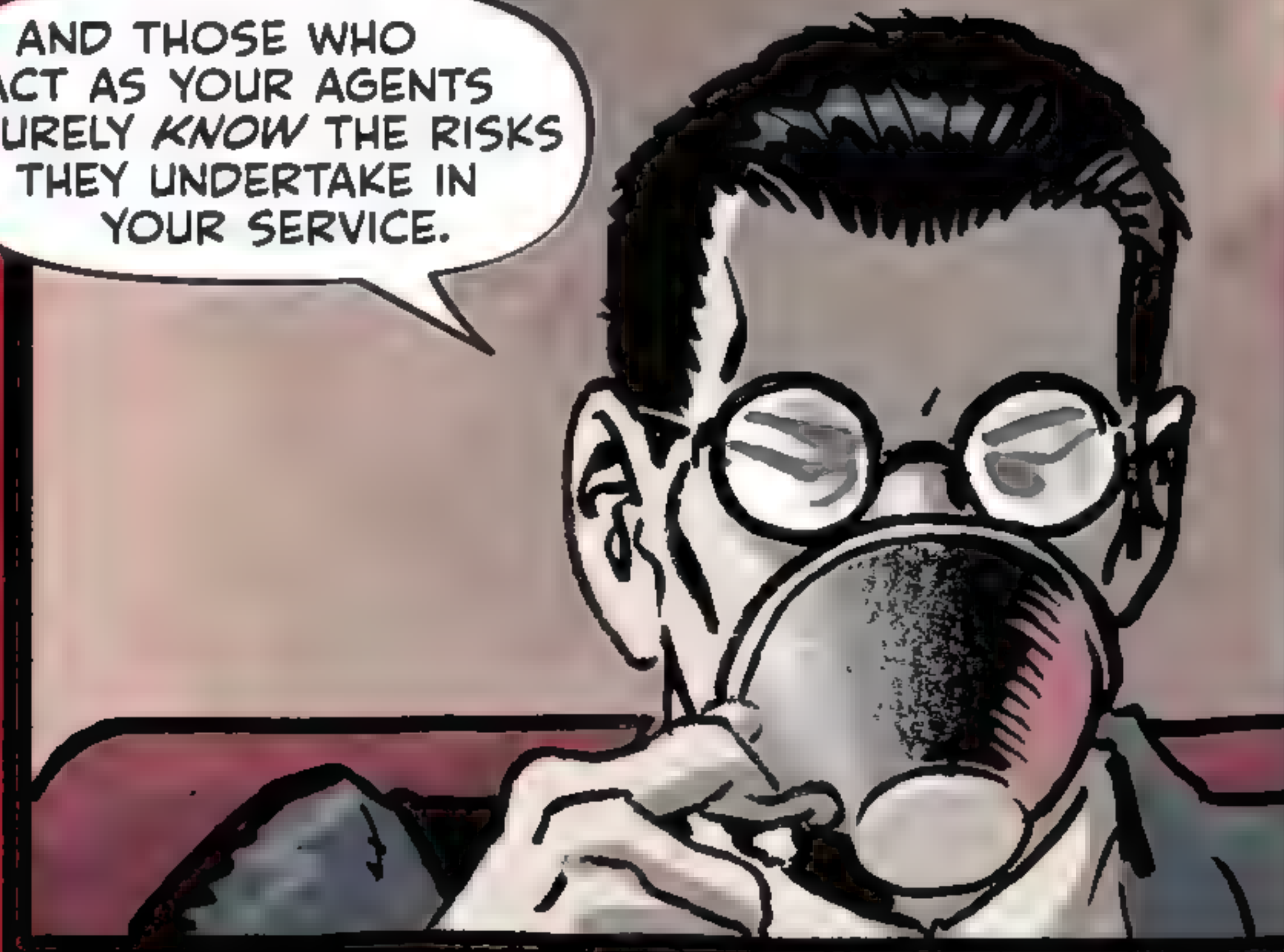
YOU FEAR THE
REPERCUSSIONS
OF YOUR...
TURMOIL?

I FEAR THE
LOSS OF INNOCENT
LIVES, YES.

A PERFECTLY
SOUND AND MORAL
CONCERN.

IN THE
COURSE OF YOUR
EXPLOITS, I SUSPECT YOU
HAVE SAVED HUNDREDS...
PERHAPS *THOUSANDS*
OF LIVES.

AND THOSE WHO
ACT AS YOUR AGENTS
SURELY *KNOW* THE RISKS
THEY UNDERTAKE IN
YOUR SERVICE.



PERHAPS.



AND YET THEY
DEPEND ON MY ACUMEN,
MY STRATEGY...
MY *MASTERY* TO
INSURE THE SUCCESS OF
THEIR MISSIONS.

AND THEIR
CONTINUED
SAFETY.



HM.

WHEN I'VE AIDED
YOUR EFFORTS IN A MORE
ACTIVE SENSE, I'VE TWICE
WITNESSED YOU SEEMINGLY
DISAPPEAR FROM VIEW.

EVEN THOUGH I
KNOW SUCH AN ACT
IS SCIENTIFICALLY
IMPOSSIBLE.

HOW IS
THIS DONE?





IF ONE CAN
QUELL ALL EMOTION,
AND DISPEL THE VEIL
OF PERSONAL IDENTITY...
YOU CAN BECOME A
LIVING SHADOW.

IT'S THUS
POSSIBLE TO FOOL
THE UNTRAINED EYE
INTO IGNORING
YOUR PHYSICAL
PRESENCE.

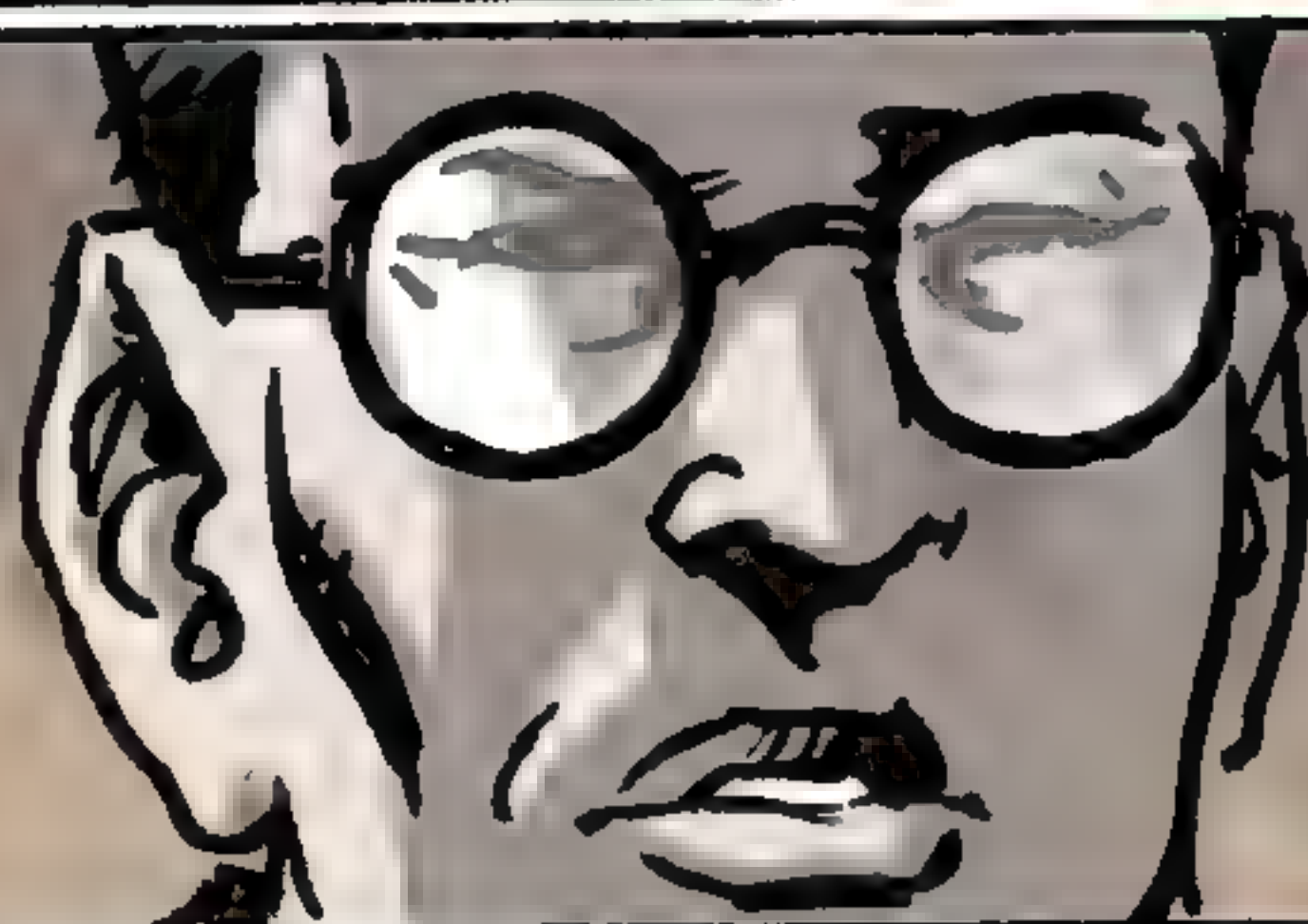
BASE AND CRIMINAL
MINDS ARE ALWAYS THE EASIEST
TO CLOUD IN THIS MANNER.
BOREDOM AND IDLENESS
MAKE SUCH A CAMOUFLAGE ALL
BUT ELEMENTARY.

I CAN SNEAK
PAST MOST GUARDS AND
SENTRIES WITHOUT PAUSE...
WITH WEAPONS IN HAND,
EVEN.

IT'S A
FACILE ILLUSION.
CHILD'S PLAY,
REALLY...



IS IT?
I COULDN'T
DO IT.



I...DON'T
TAKE YOUR
MEANING,
DOCTOR.

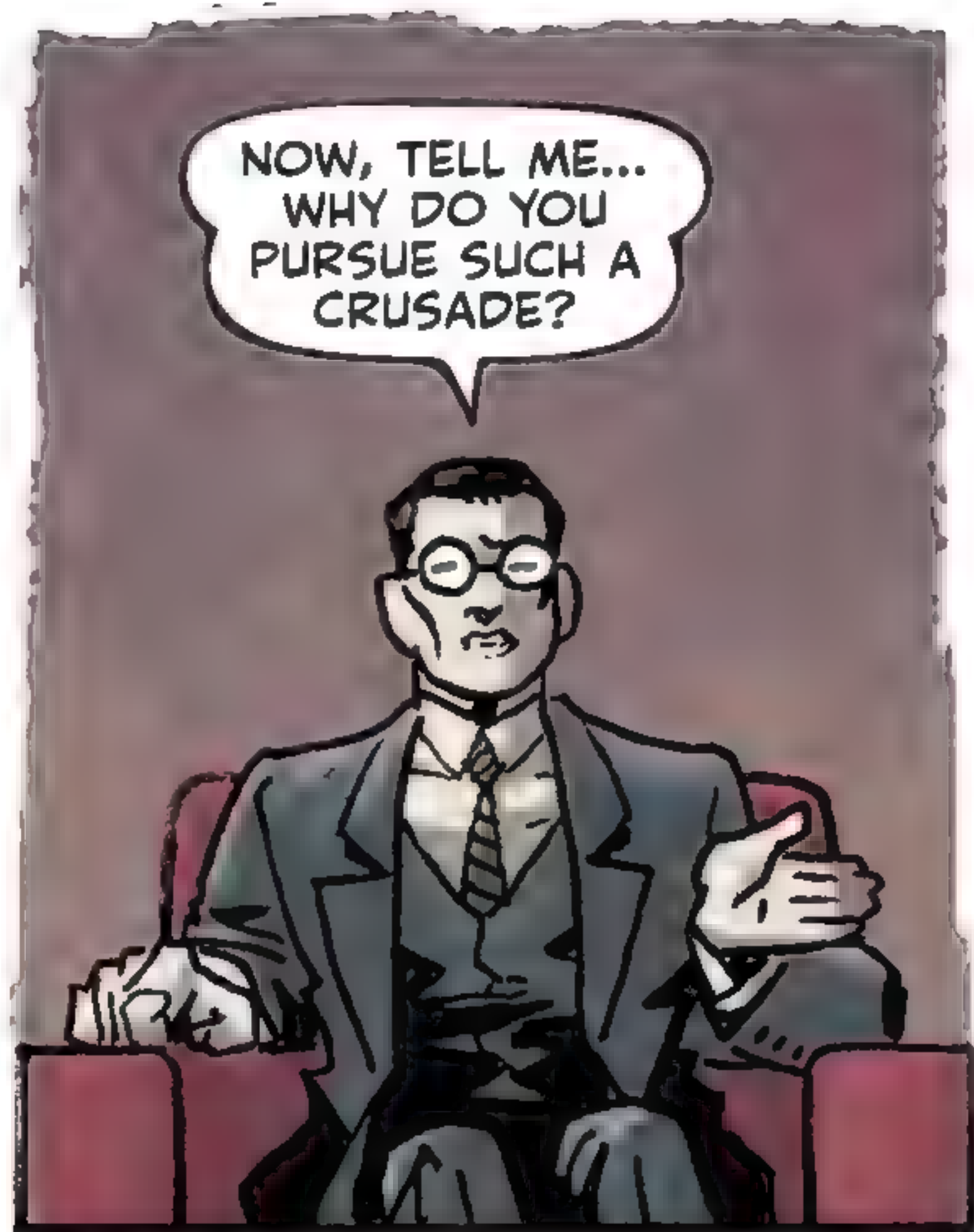




THE TRAINING, DEDICATION AND SHEER MENTAL ACUITY FOR SUCH A FEAT MUST BE ASTOUNDING.



AND YET YOU SPEAK OF IT IN A CAVALIER FASHION. YOUR FOCUS WOULD SEEM QUITE ROBUST.



NOW, TELL ME... WHY DO YOU PURSUE SUCH A CRUSADE?



WHY?

BECAUSE JUSTICE DEMANDS A CHAMPION! A PALADIN WILLING TO FIGHT OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF REGULAR LAW ENFORCEMENT.

SOMEONE UNAFRAID TO TAKE UP ARMS AND CONFRONT THE DARKEST AGENTS OF ATROCITY.

SOMEONE WHO TRULY KNOWS THE WICKEDNESS THAT HAUNTS MEN'S SOULS.

THAT SOMEONE IS ME.



HM.

A KEEN AND CONFIDENT SENSE OF MISSION AS WELL.

PERHAPS YOU HAVE SUFFERED SOME RECENT INJURY OR LOSS TO TRIGGER THIS DISORIENTATION.

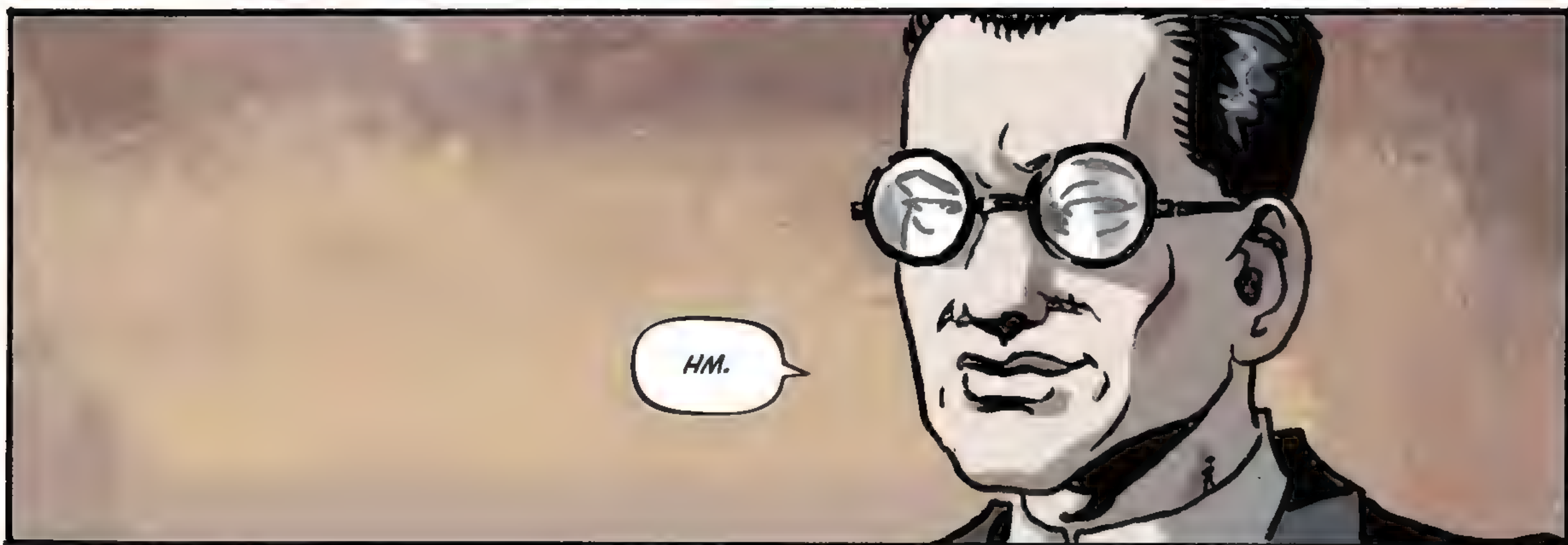
THAT'S HUMAN. IT'S NORMAL. IT'S HEALTHY.

BUT YOUR CAPACITIES SEEM AS VIGOROUS AS EVER. I'D SAY YOU'RE FIT TO COMMAND.



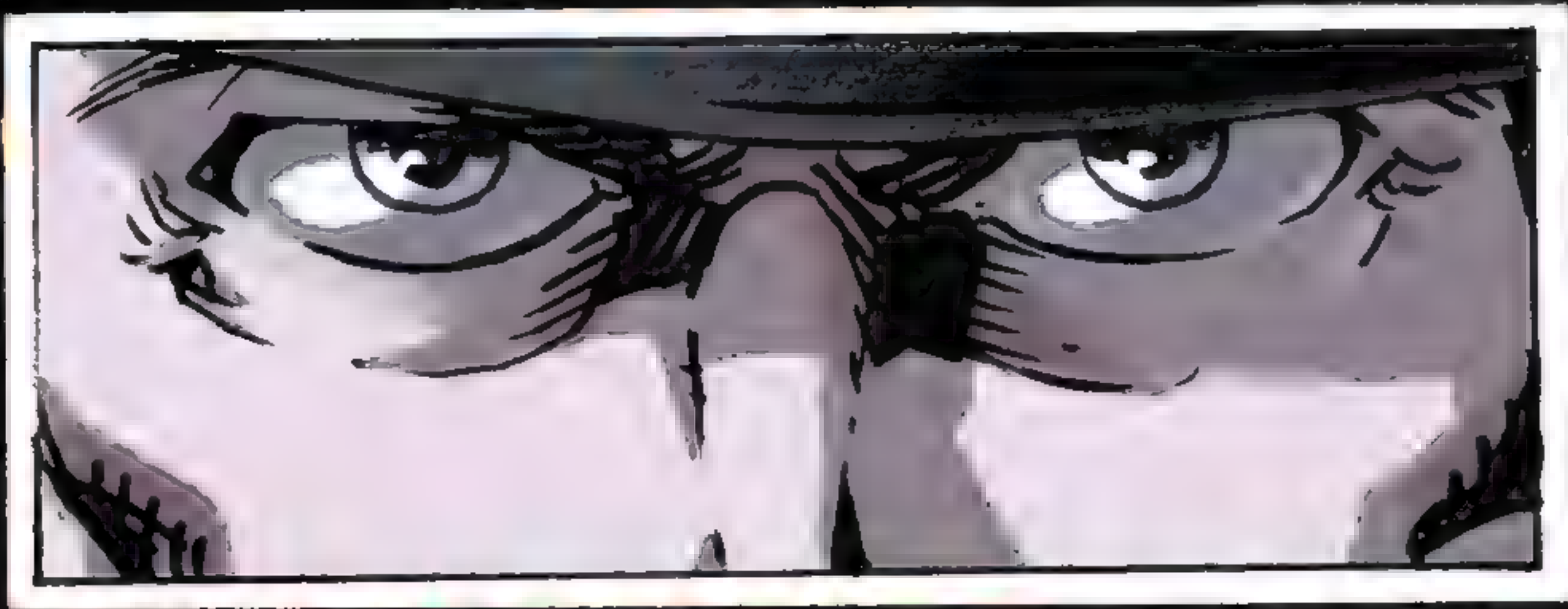
PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, ROY. PERHAPS...

OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS--



A PENTHOUSE
APARTMENT WITH
A VIEW OF THE PARK...
HARDLY AFFORDABLE ON
A HARBOR MASTER'S
SALARY.

ABNER SCHMIDT!
YOU HAVE SUCCUMBED
TO BRIBERY! YOU FALSIFIED
RECORDS TO CONCEAL THE
DOCKING HISTORY FOR
AN ASIAN SMUGGLING
FREIGHTER--THE
RISING DAWN!



EXCEPT THE
RISING DAWN
WAS NEVER
BOUND FOR ASIA,
WAS IT? AT LEAST
NOT ANY TIME
SOON...

A black and white illustration of a man in a suit sitting at a desk. He is looking towards the left, holding a small object in his hands. On the desk is a clock and some papers. The background is a simple wall with a clock. The man has a mustache and a serious expression.

HOW DID
Y--?!

N-NO...

THE
RISING DAWN
IS ACTUALLY A
FLOATING SANCTUARY
FOR THE ELUSIVE
RED EMPRESS,
ISN'T IT?

THEY'VE BEEN
CRUISING THE COAST...
OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS
OF U.S. TERRITORY,
IN INTERNATIONAL
WATERS!





SUCH IS THE
BITTER HARVEST
OF CRIME!

THE
SHADOW
KNOWS!

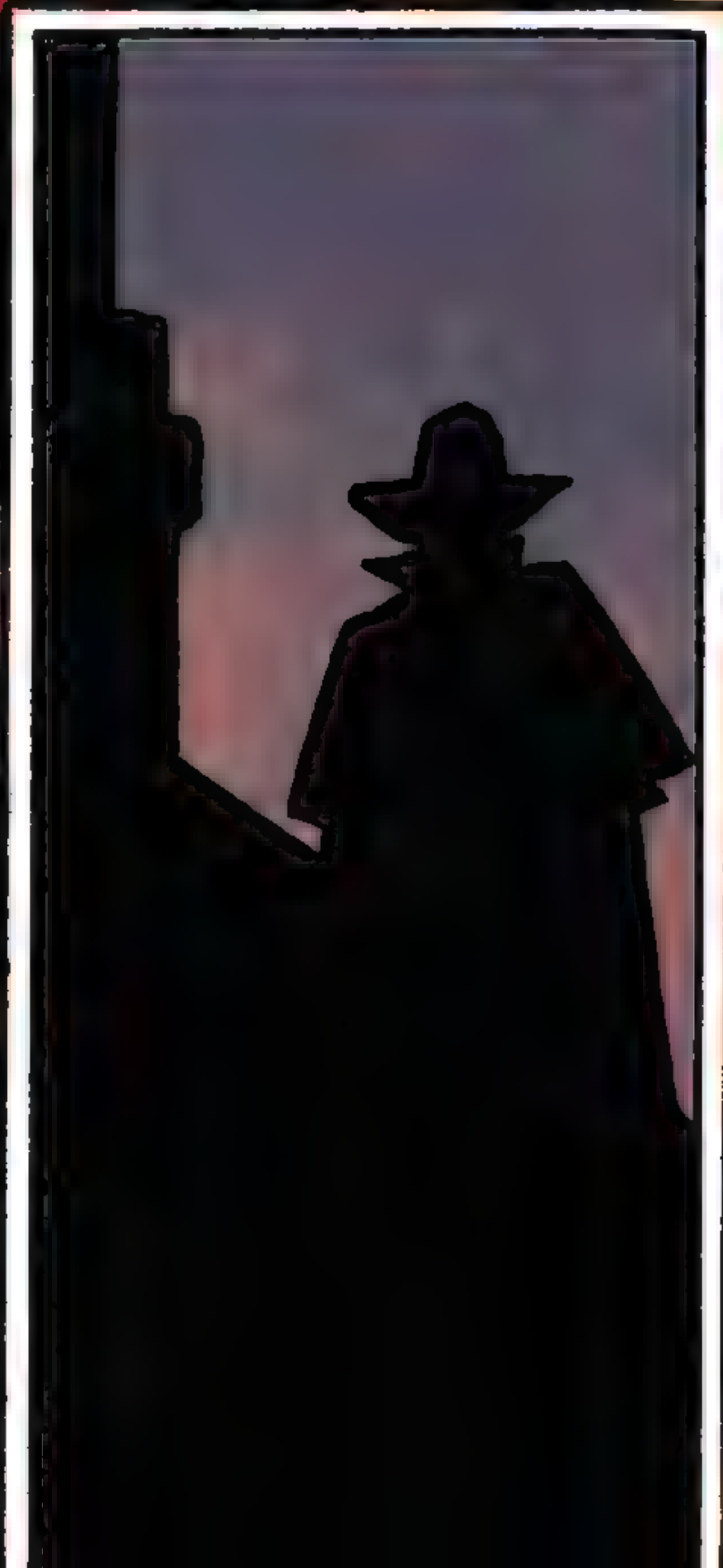
AAGHH!

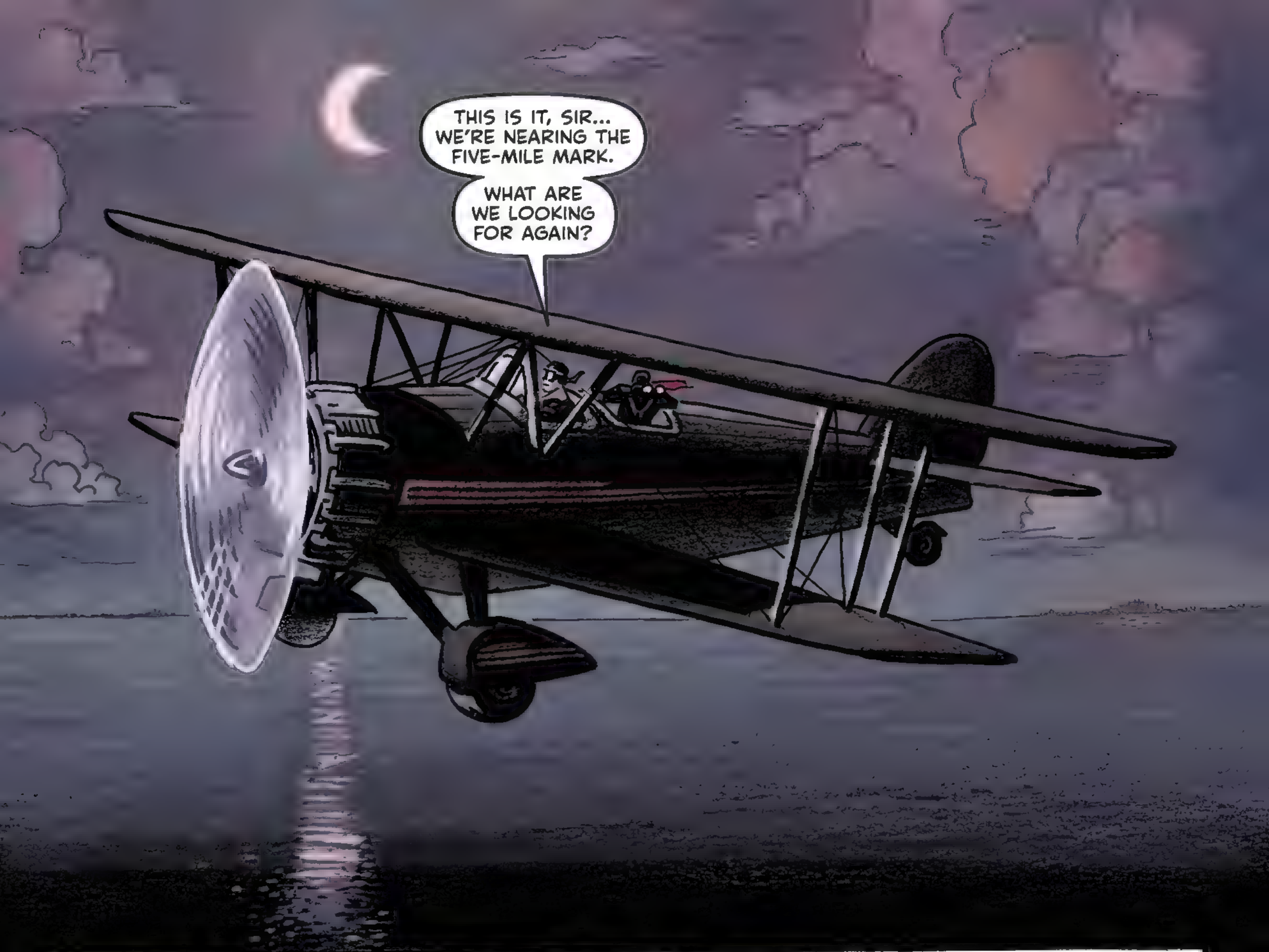


GET
BACK!

TH-THEY
TOLD ME! THEY
W-W-WARNED ME
ABOUT YOU!

I..I'VE
GOT A GUN!
I SWEAR,
I'LL SH--





THIS IS IT, SIR...
WE'RE NEARING THE
FIVE-MILE MARK.

WHAT ARE
WE LOOKING
FOR AGAIN?



A SINGLE-STACK
FREIGHTER, PROBABLY
CRUISING AT HALF-SPEED
OR LESS.

I SUSPECT THEY'LL
AVOID REGULAR SHIPPING
LANES BUT SHE SHOULD BE
SOMEWHERE ALONG THIS
STRETCH.

ROGER
THAT.

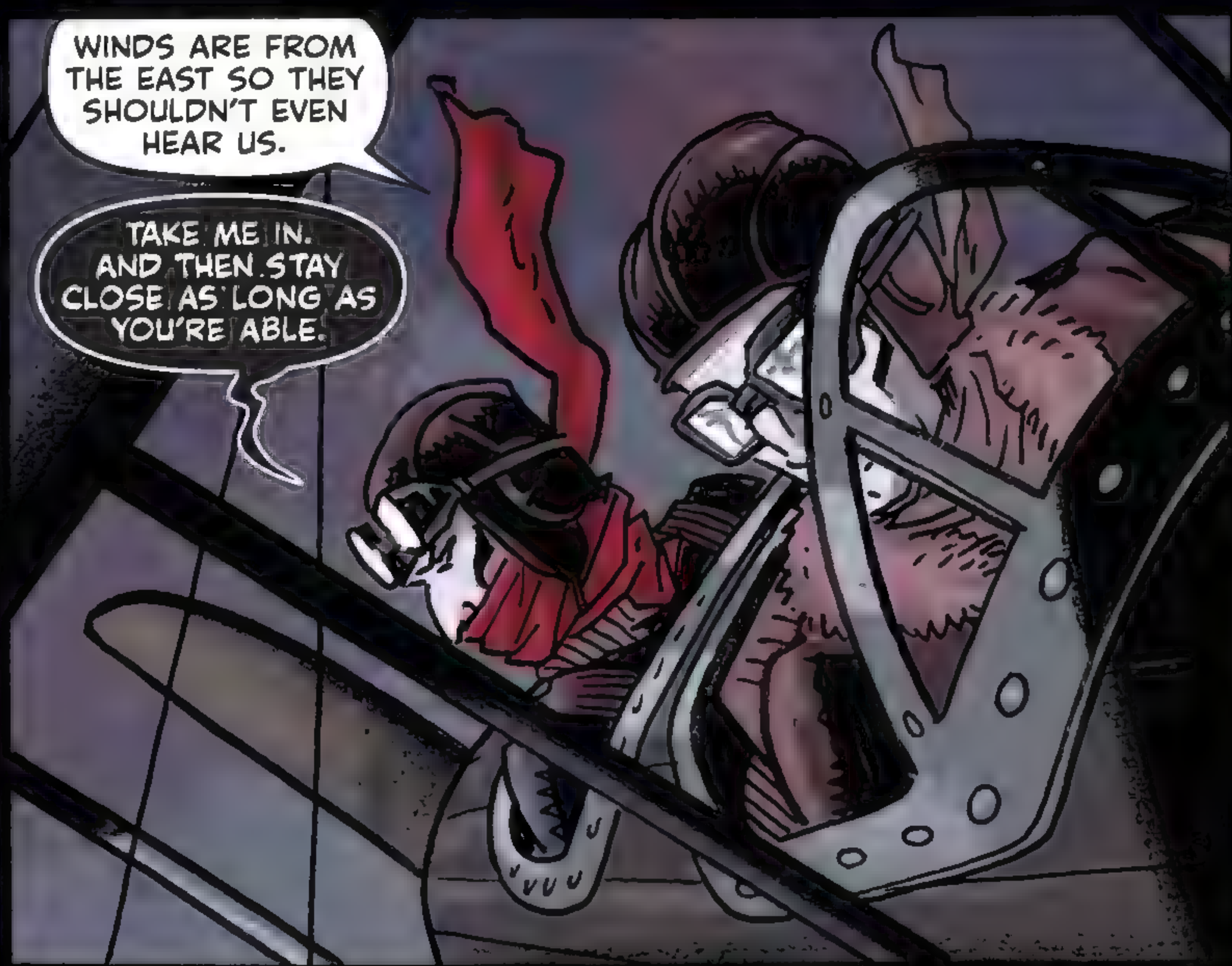


WE'VE GOT ABOUT ANOTHER
HOUR'S WORTH OF FUEL
BEFORE WE HAVE TO HEAD
BACK TO SHORE.



THANK YOU,
MILES.

BUT IT SEEMS
THAT WON'T BE
NECESSARY...



WINDS ARE FROM
THE EAST SO THEY
SHOULDN'T EVEN
HEAR US.

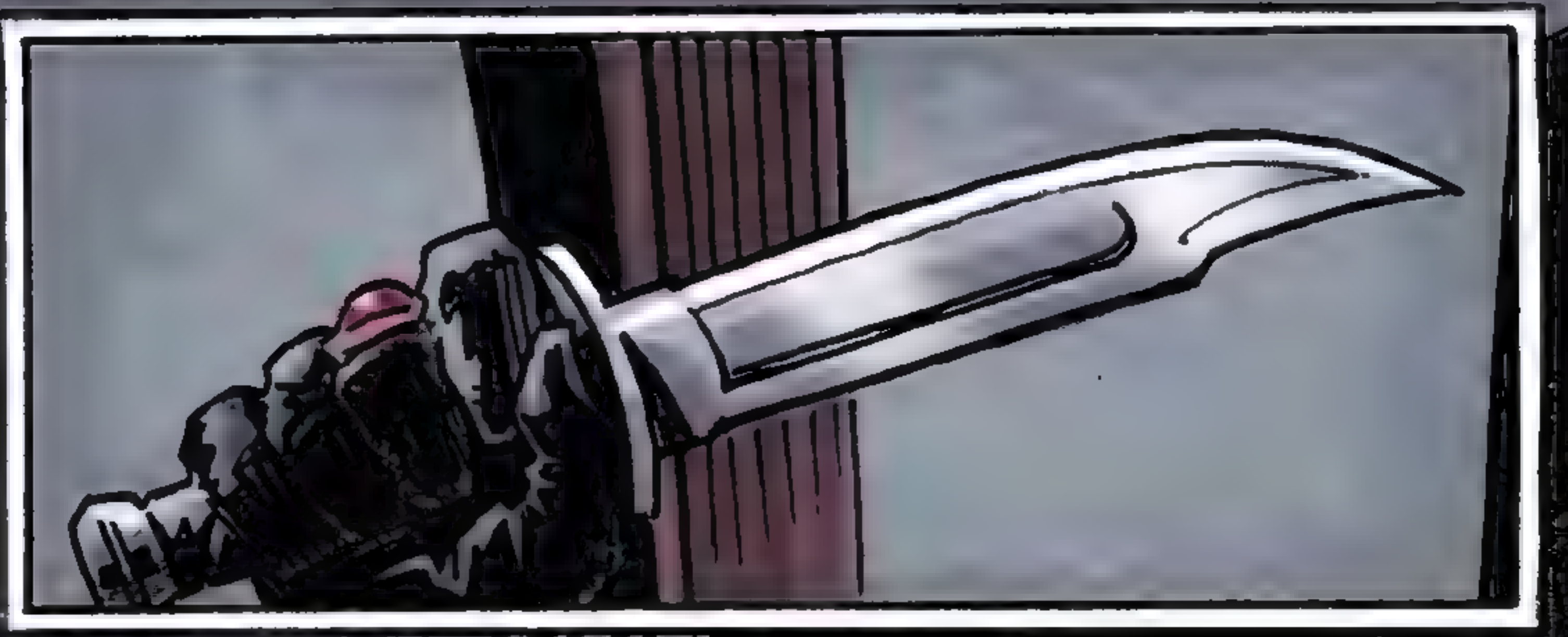
TAKE ME IN.
AND THEN STAY
CLOSE AS LONG AS
YOU'RE ABLE.

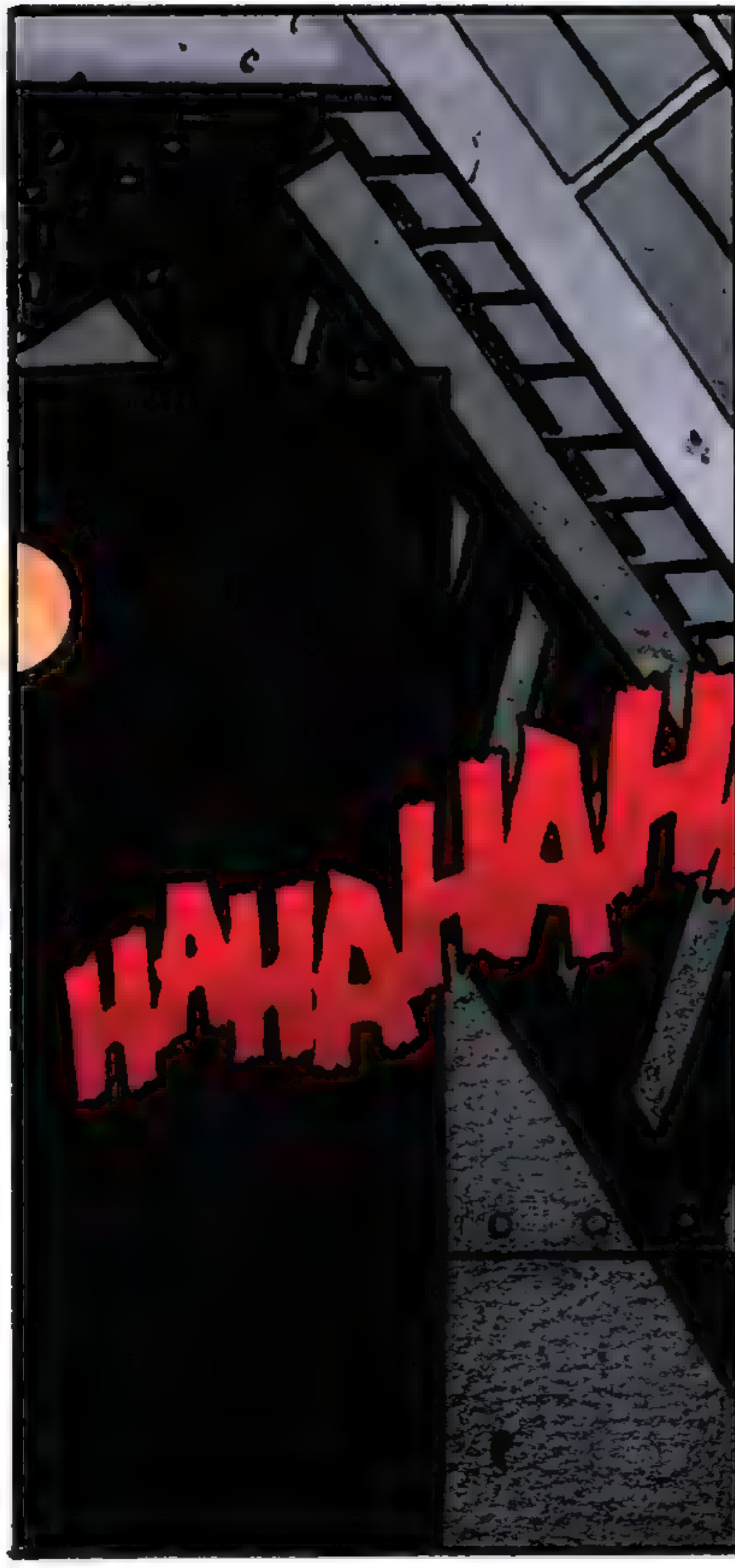
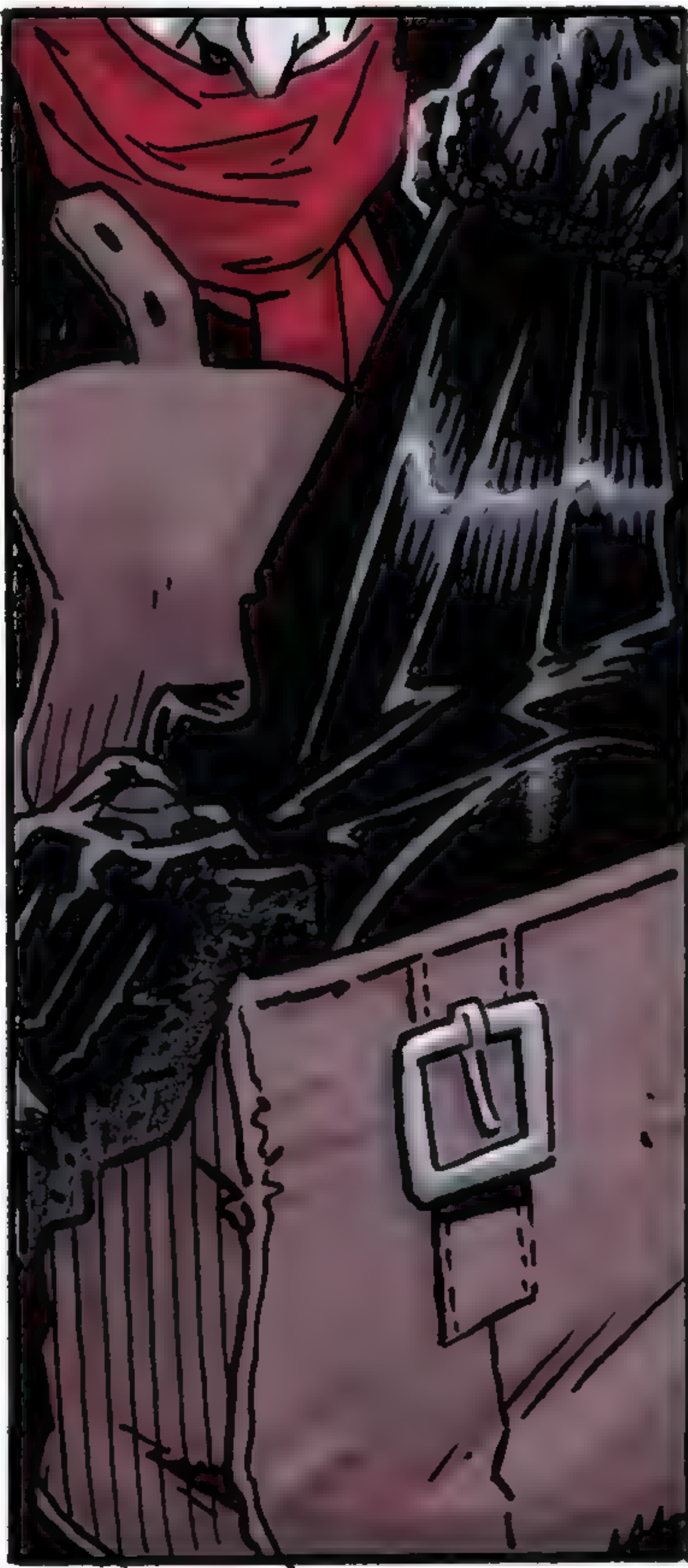
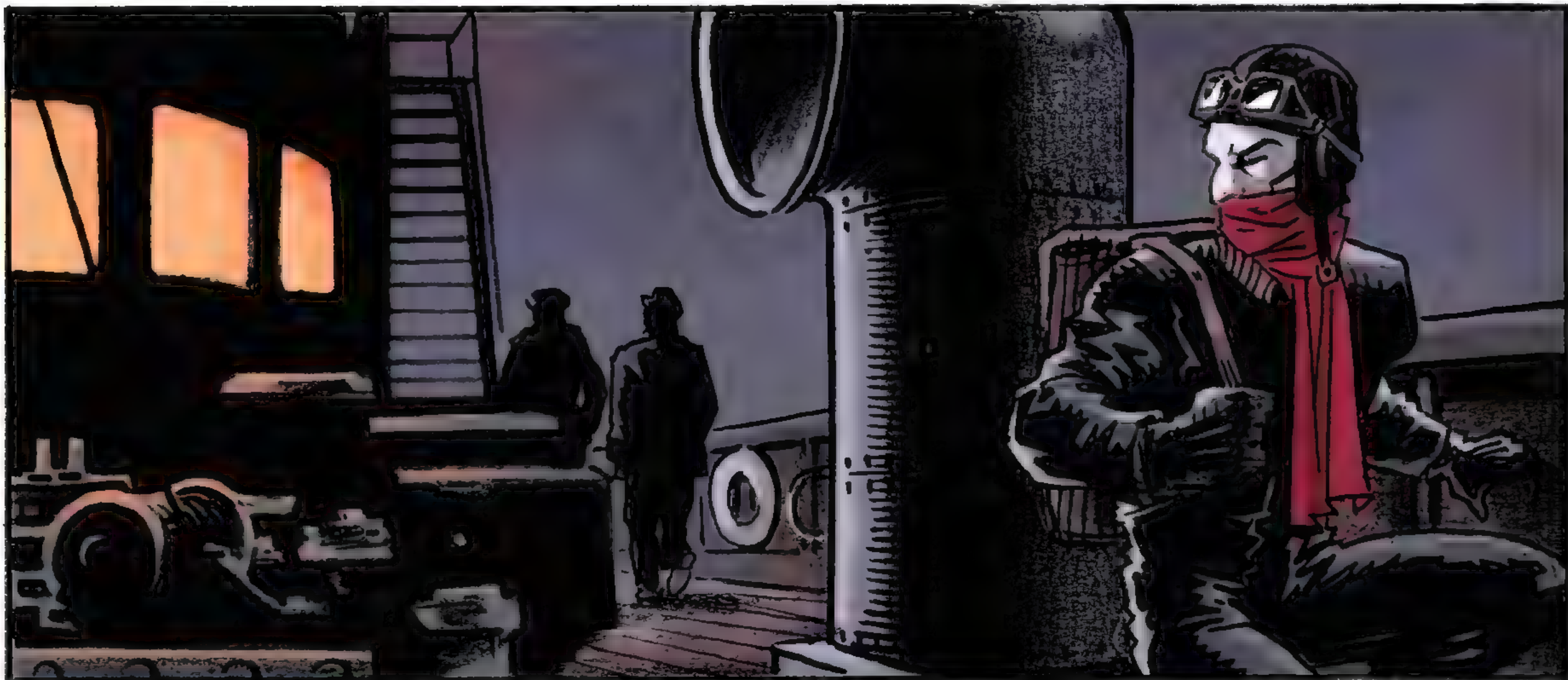
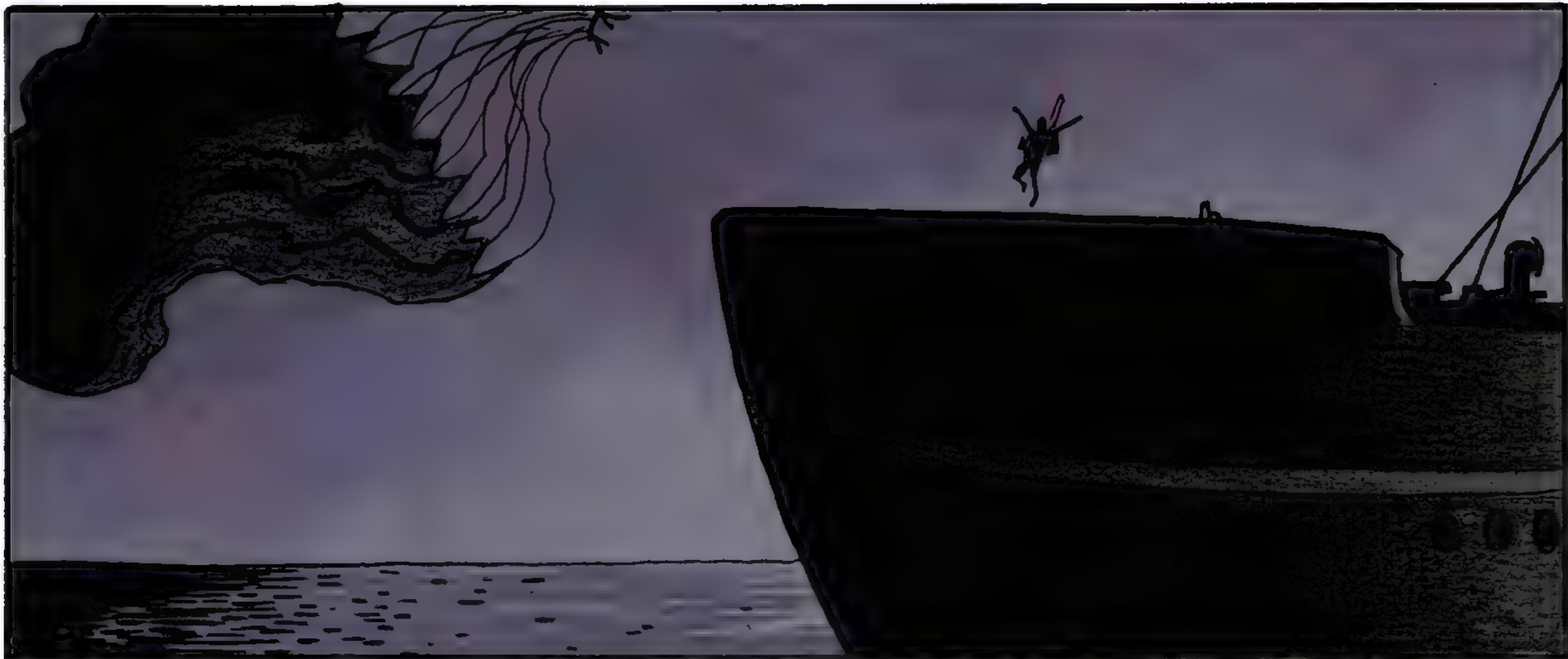


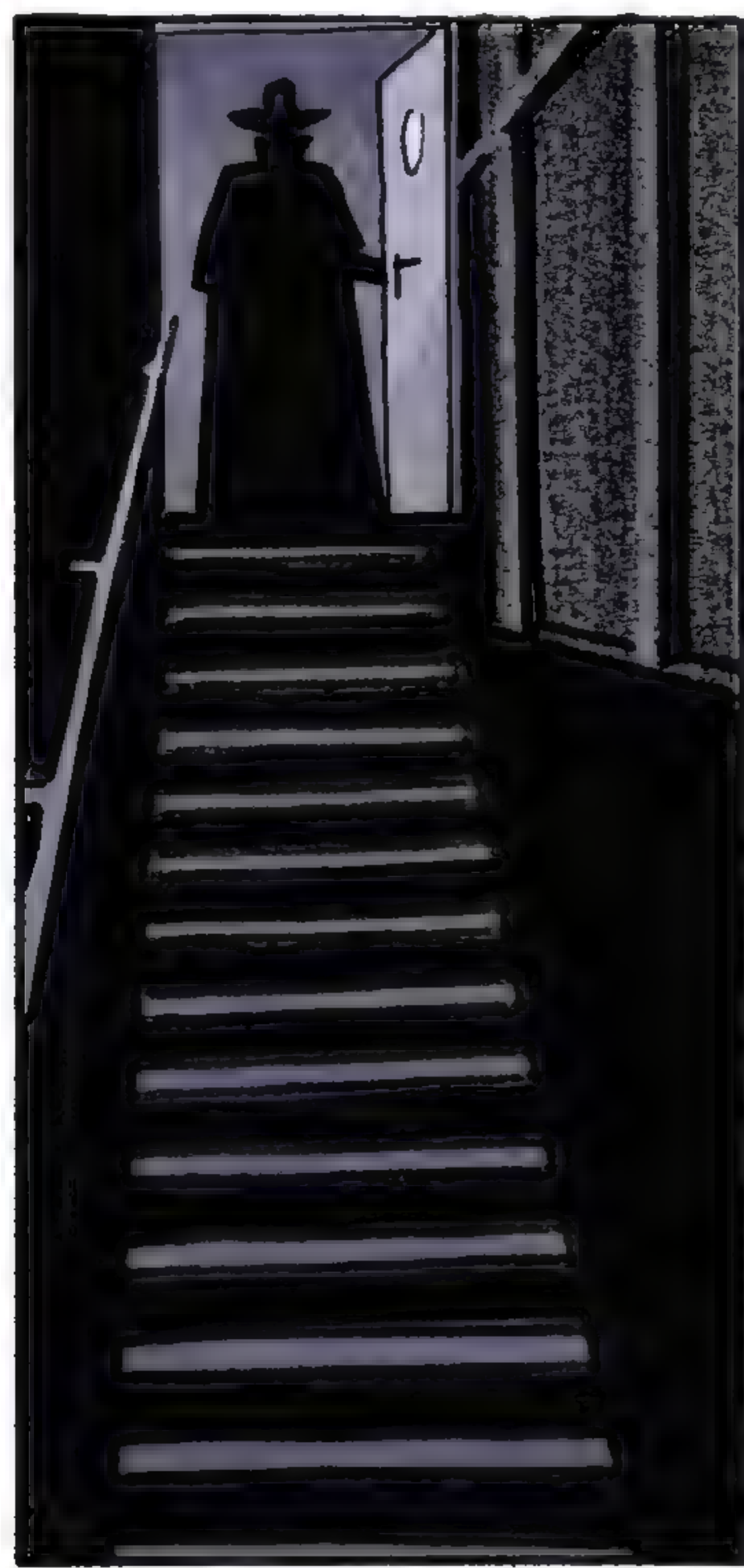
WATCH
FOR MY
SIGNAL.

ROGER
THAT, SIR.



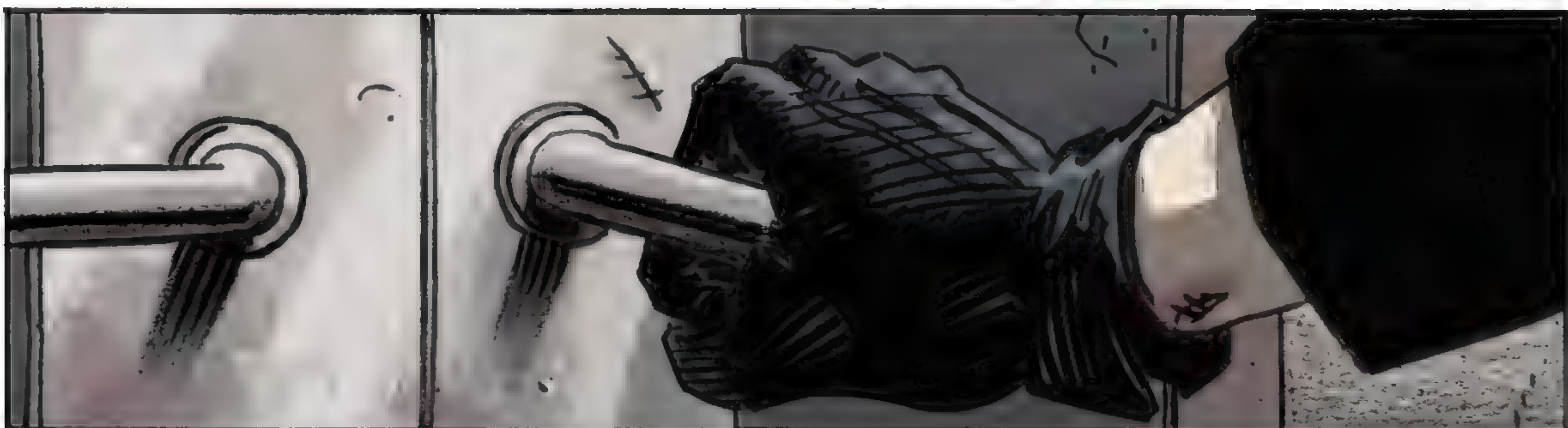
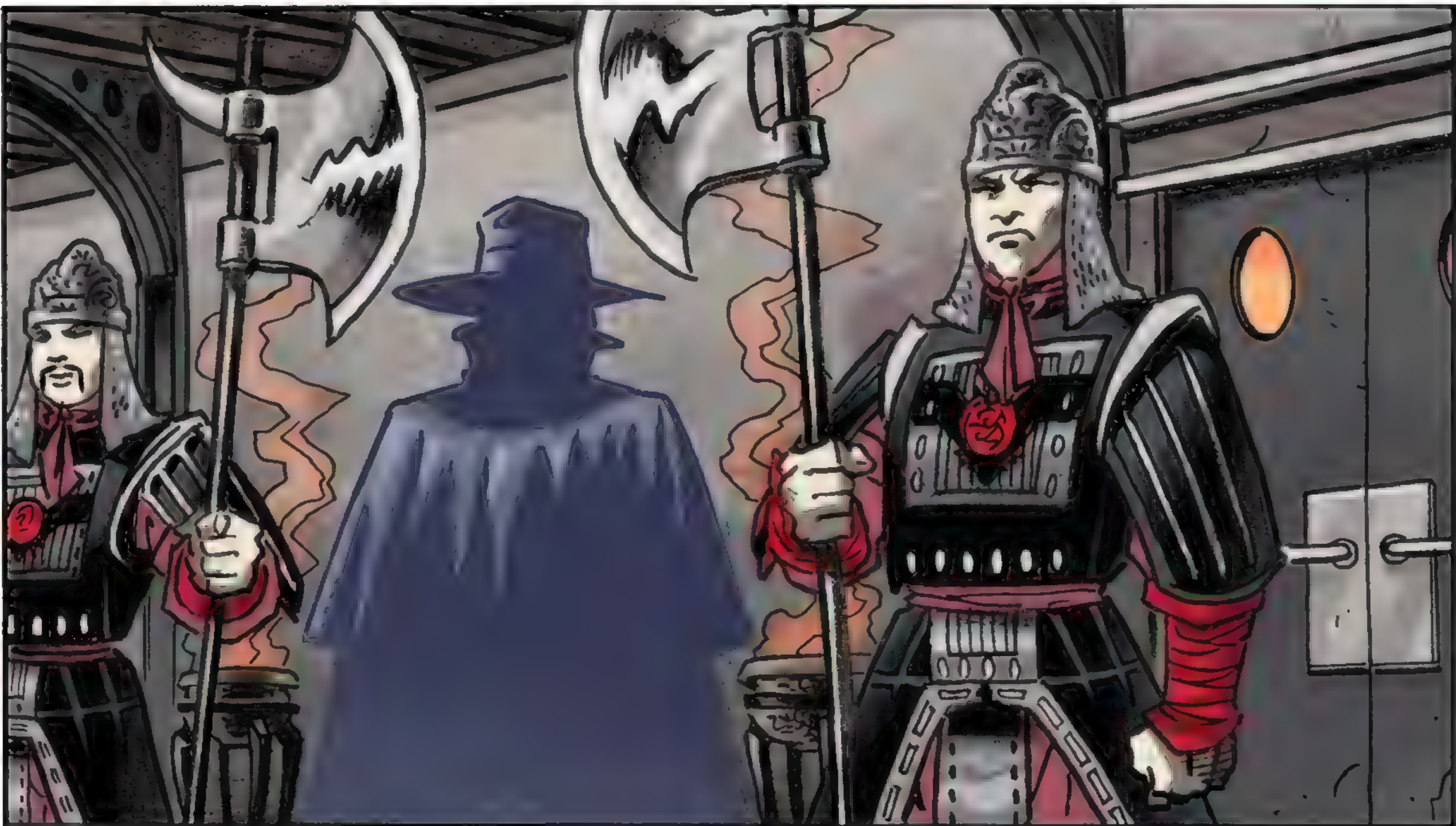
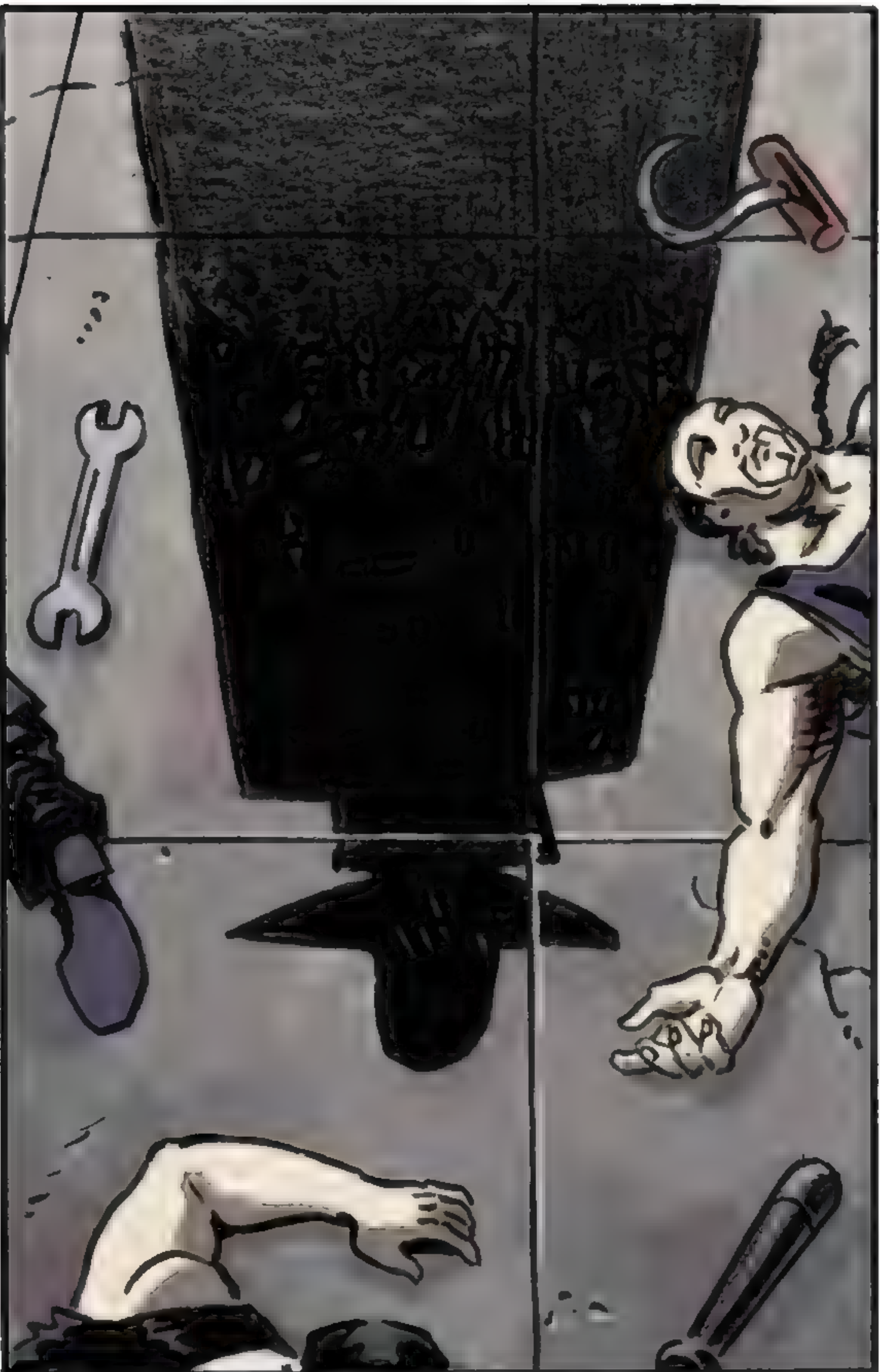
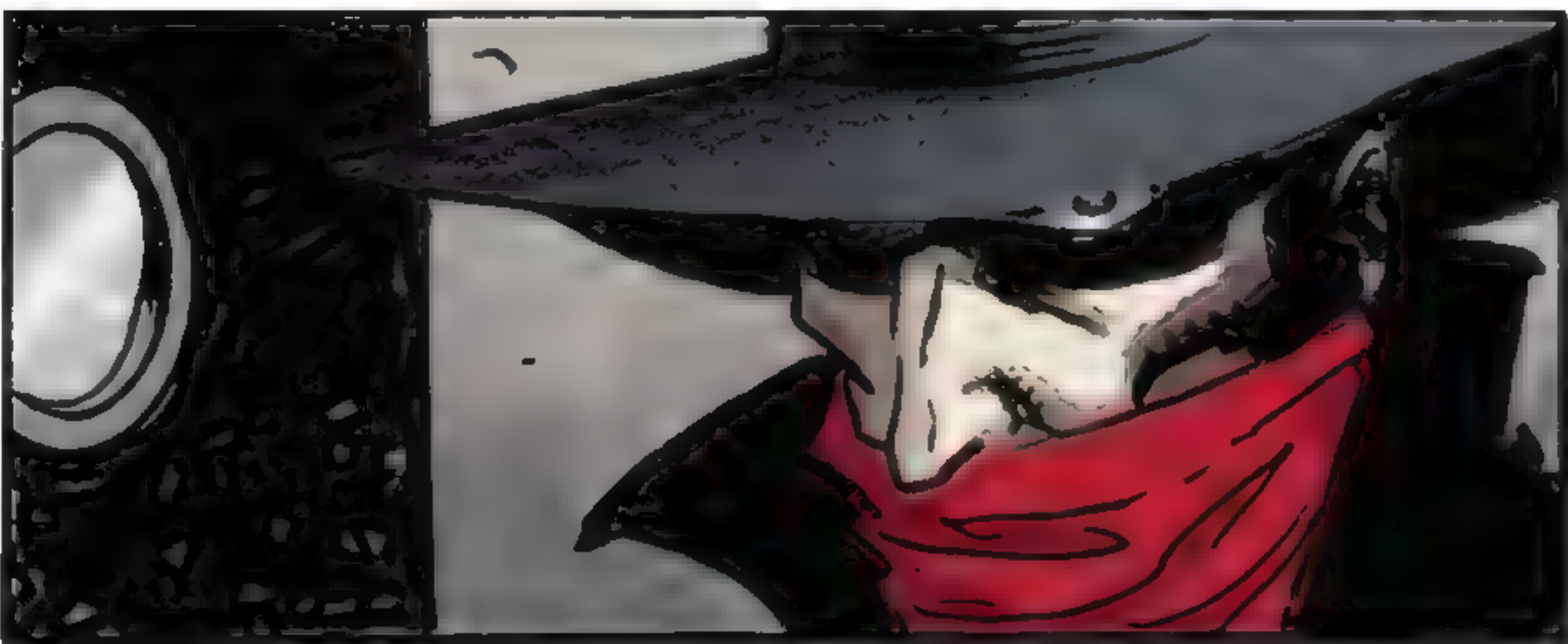
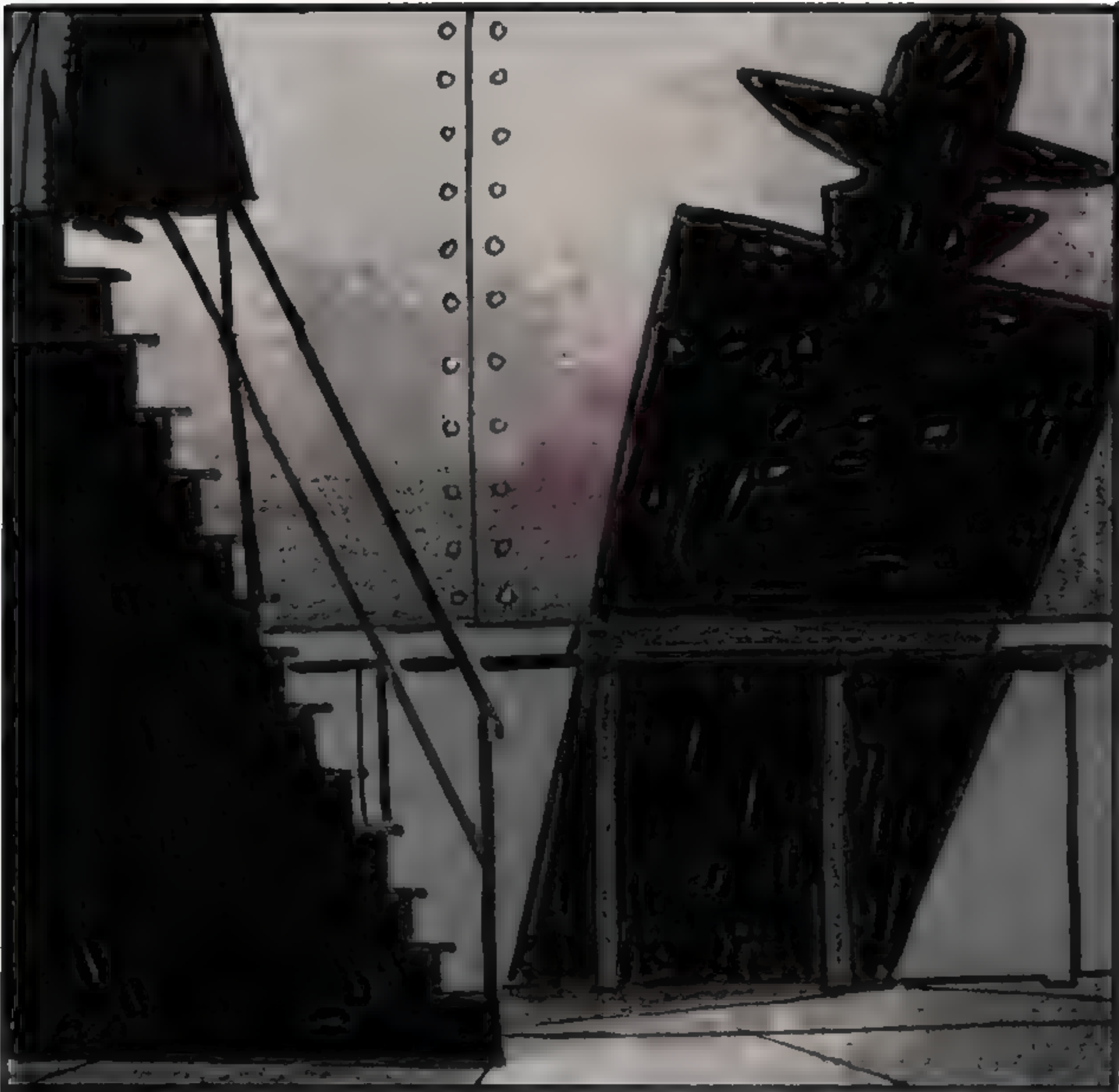














WELCOME,
YING KO!
DO COME
IN...



YOU KNOW,
I HAD A NAGGING SUSPICION
THAT YOU'D SOMEHOW ESCAPED
THAT EXPLOSION! BUT LI...
HE WAS CONVINCED THAT YOU
WERE BURNED AND CRISPY.

LOOKS LIKE
HE OWES ME
TWO GRAND!

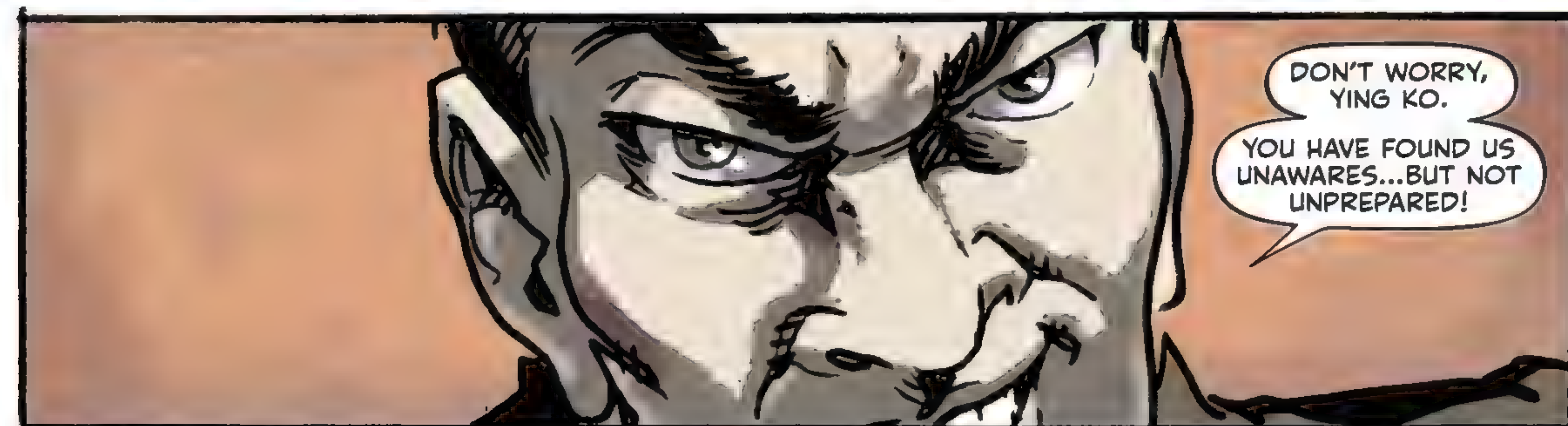
SON-OF-A-BITCH!



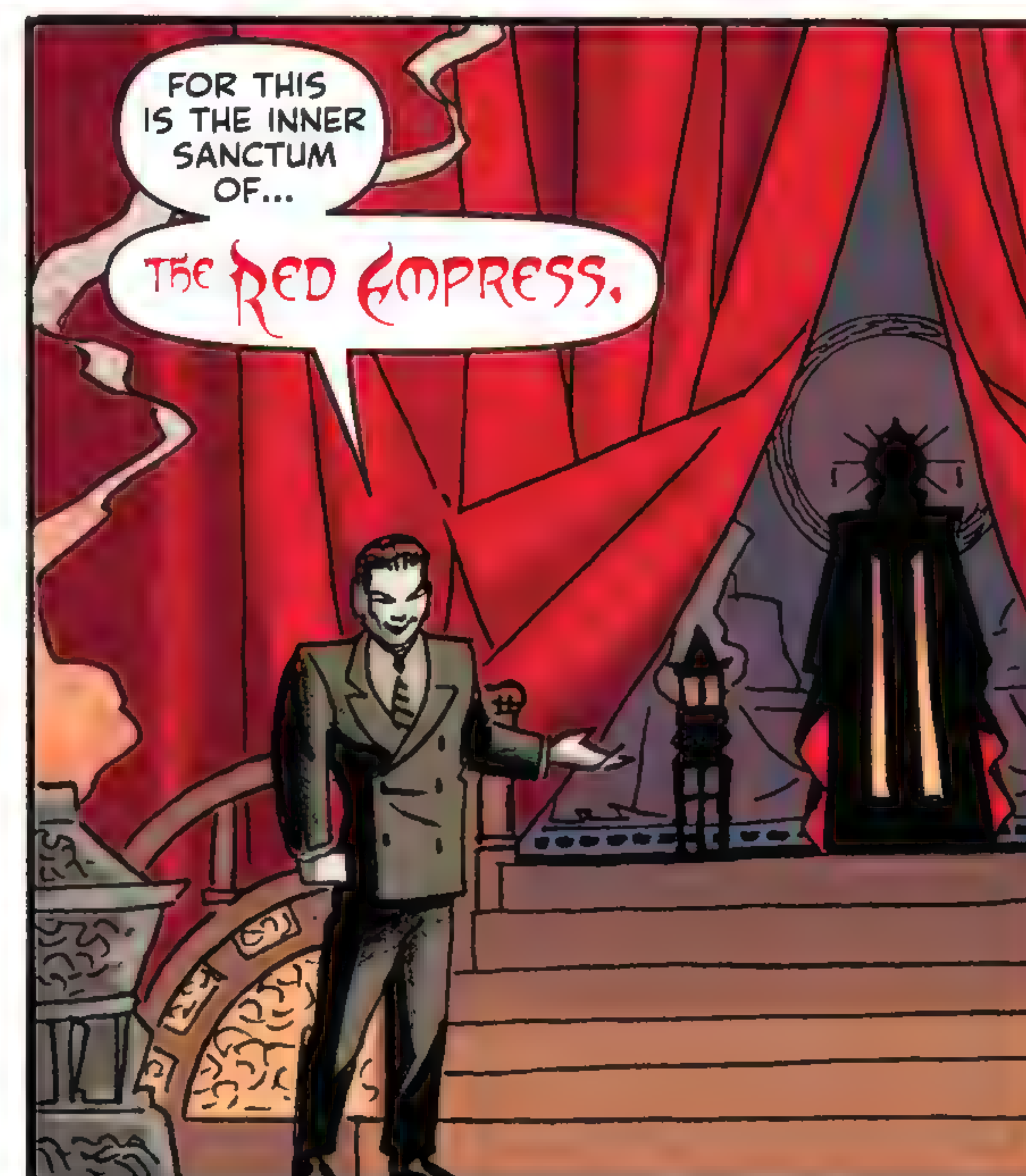
OF COURSE,
WE'D HEARD THAT
YOU WERE STILL ON A
DESPERATE QUEST TO
LOCATE OUR TRUE
STRONGHOLD.

AND NOW...
HERE YOU
ARE!

NO GAMES,
FLUNKY.
WHERE IS YOUR
MISTRESS?



DON'T WORRY,
YING KO.
YOU HAVE FOUND US
UNAWARES...BUT NOT
UNPREPARED!



FOR THIS
IS THE INNER
SANCTUM
OF...

THE RED EMPRESS.



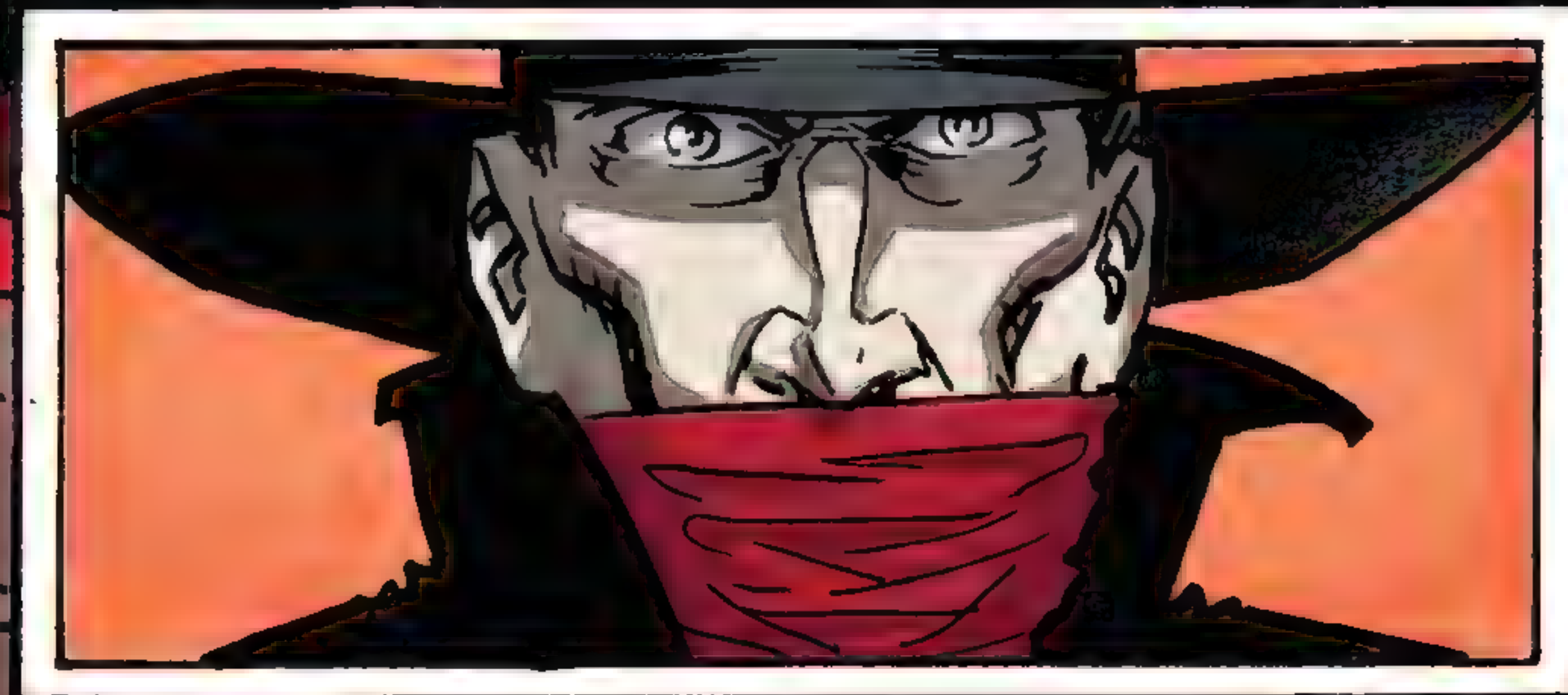
AT LAST,
WE MEET!
YING KO--

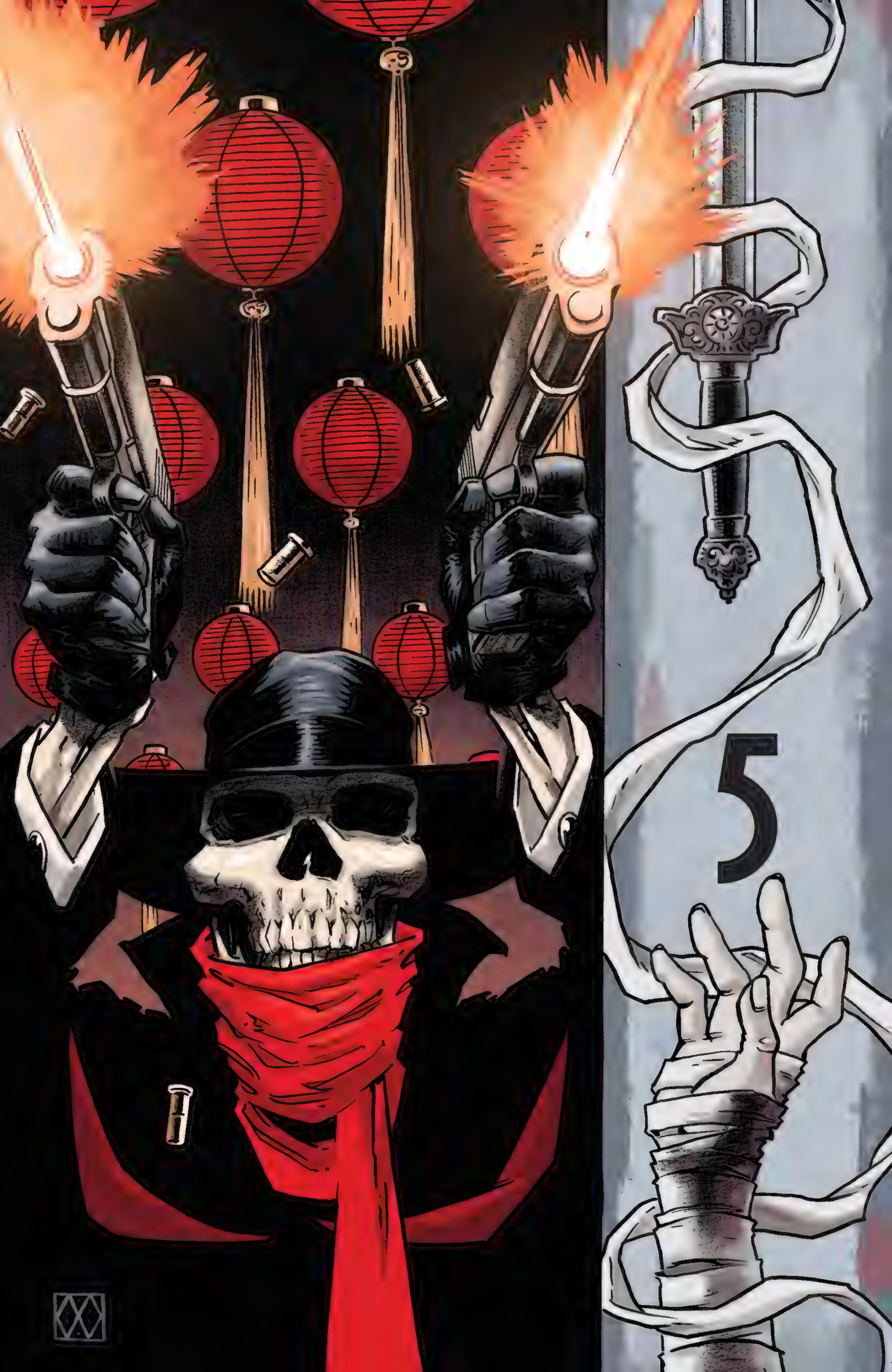
--THE DREAD
"SHADOW OF
JUDGMENT"!

OR
SHOULD I CALL
YOU...LAMONT
CRANSTON?
OR IS
IT...HENRY
ARNAUD?
PERHAPS...
KENT
ALLARD?

OH, YES...I KNOW
MANY OF YOUR SECRETS,
YING KO. SECRETS OF THE
MAN WHO **MURDERED**
MY FATHER!

FOR I AM
ZHU KHANUM...
THE DAUGHTER OF--
**SHIWAN
KHAN!**





One of his most relentless and sinister villains was the self-styled despot, **Shiwan Khan**, who claimed a direct lineage from the feared mongol warlord, Temujin... better known as **Ghengis Khan**.

Bent on world domination and the destruction of western culture, this megalomaniacal fiend finally met his end in a fiery blaze, a victim of his own wicked schemes.

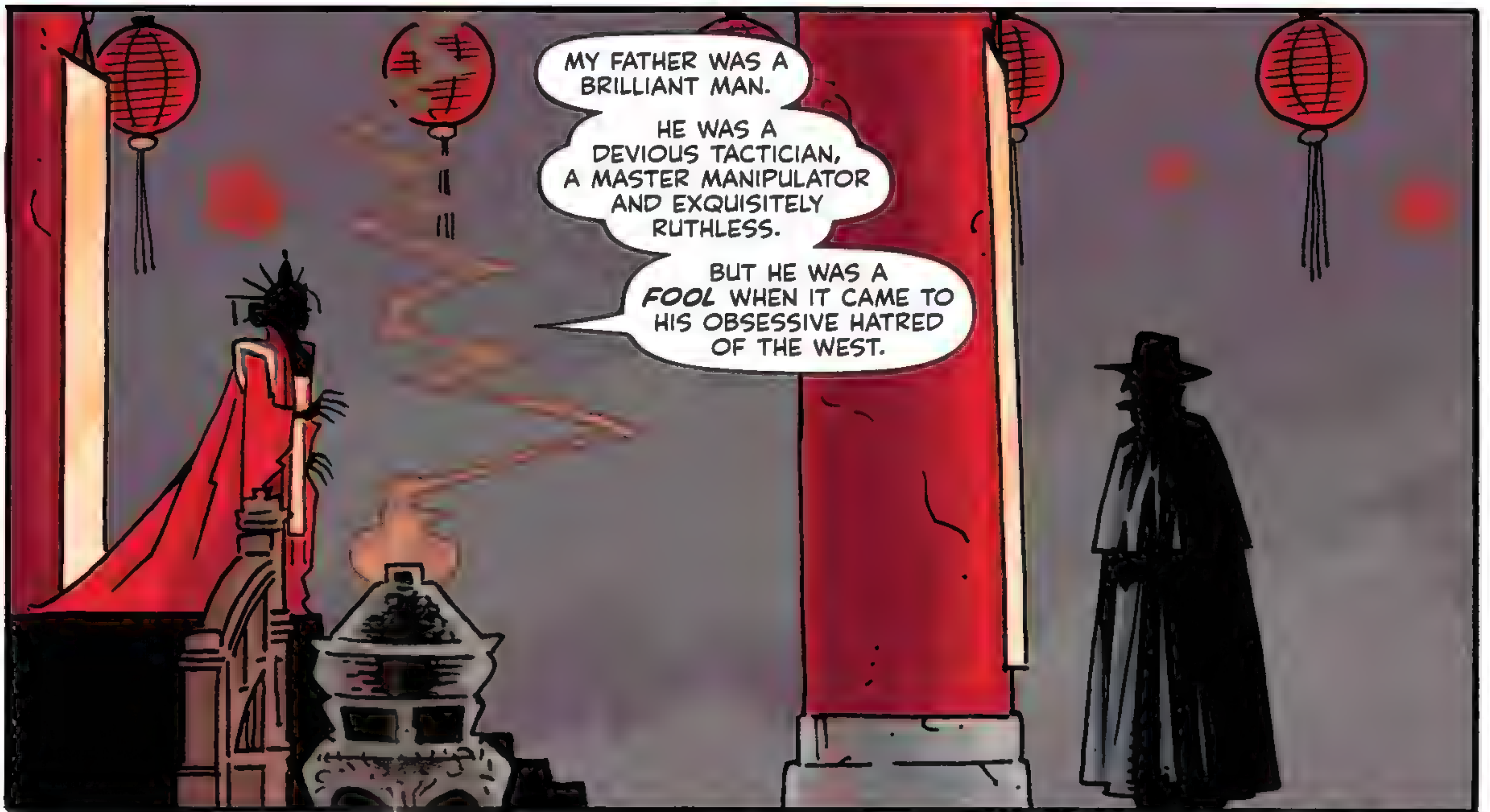
YESSS...I AM **SHIWAN KHAN'S** DAUGHTER, **HEIR** TO HIS NETWORK OF UNDERWORLD ENTERPRISES, DISCIPLE OF HIS CUNNING FEROCITY AND SCION OF HIS IMPERIAL LEGACY.

I HAVE RESURRECTED MY FATHER'S CRIMINAL EMPIRE... AND WROUGHT FROM IT A VAST DOMINION THAT IS FAR BEYOND ANYTHING HE HAD EVER IMAGINED.

ALL, I ASSUME, WITH THE AIM OF CONTINUING HIS INSANE CRUSADE? TO RAIN HAVOC AND DESPAIR ON THE NATIONS OF THE WEST.

IT IS THE DREAM OF A **MADMAN!**





MY FATHER WAS A
BRILLIANT MAN.

HE WAS A
DEVIOUS TACTICIAN,
A MASTER MANIPULATOR
AND EXQUISITELY
RUTHLESS.

BUT HE WAS A
FOOL WHEN IT CAME TO
HIS OBSESSIVE HATRED
OF THE WEST.



ASIAN CULTURE
HAS BLOSSOMED
AND FLOURISHED
FOR THOUSANDS
OF YEARS.

AND CHINA NOW
FINDS ITSELF RENT BY
TURMOIL AND TRANSITION.
THE SOUTHERN NATIONS
TREMBLE AT ITS INSTABILITY
AND DISTRESS.

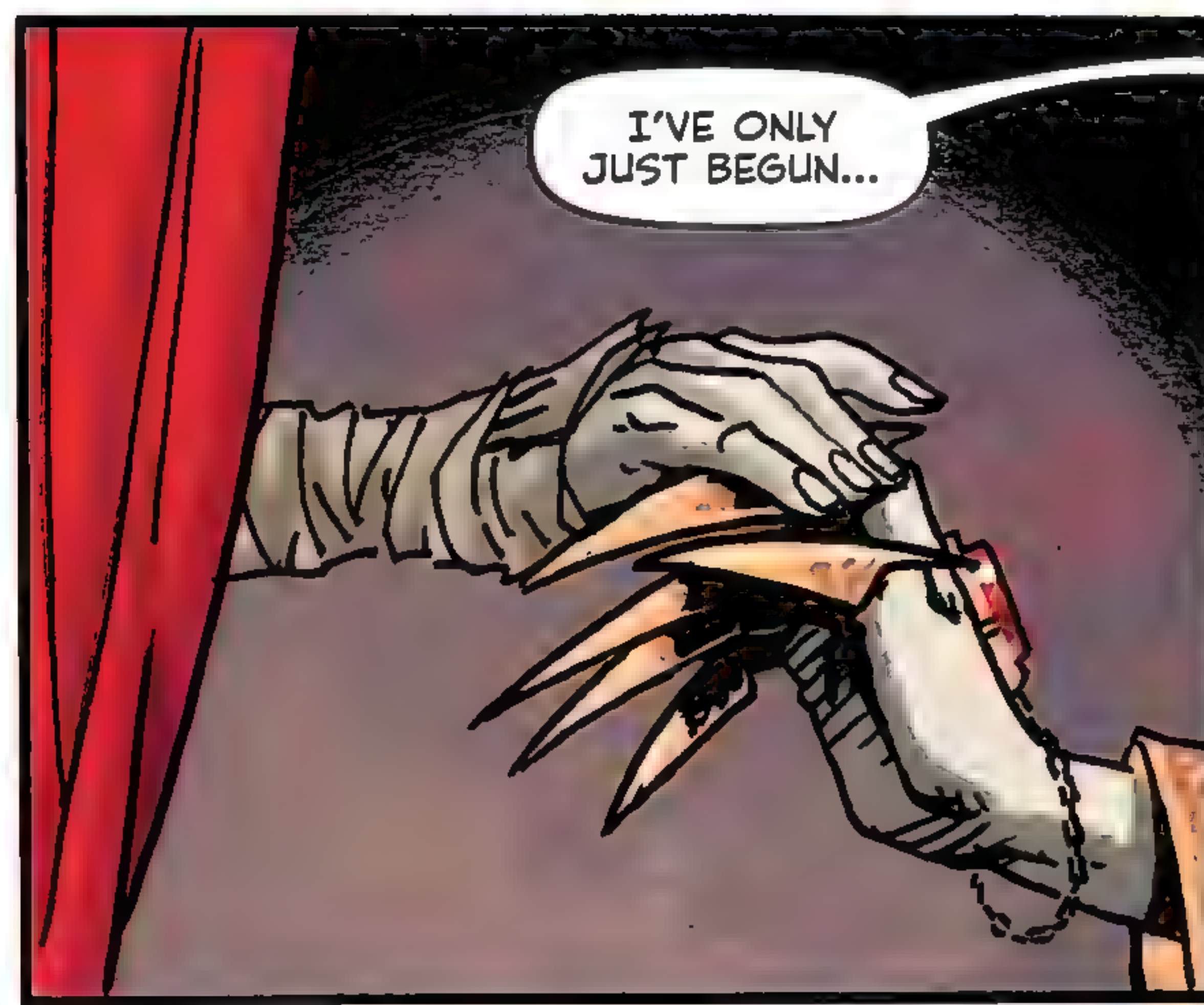
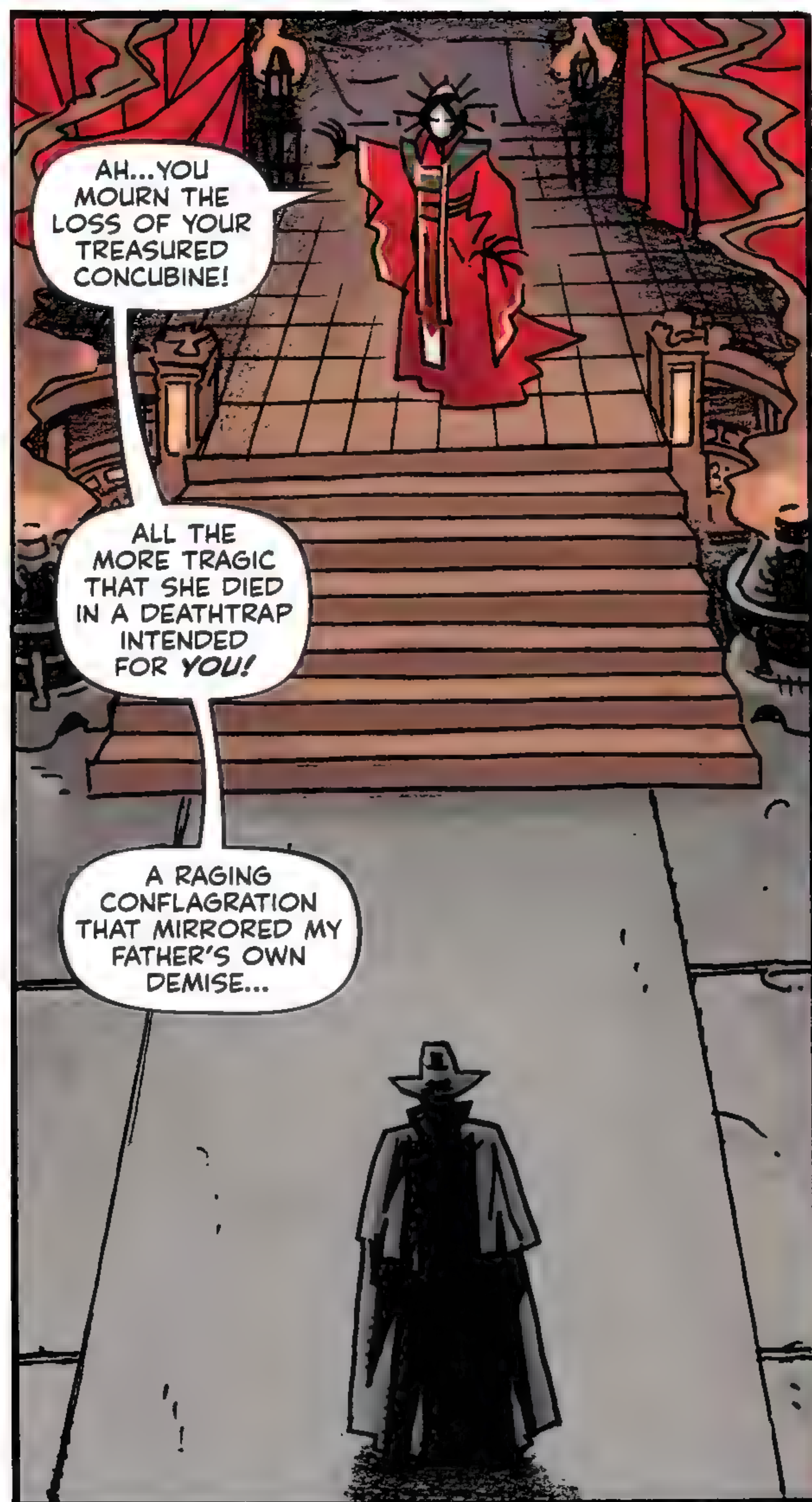
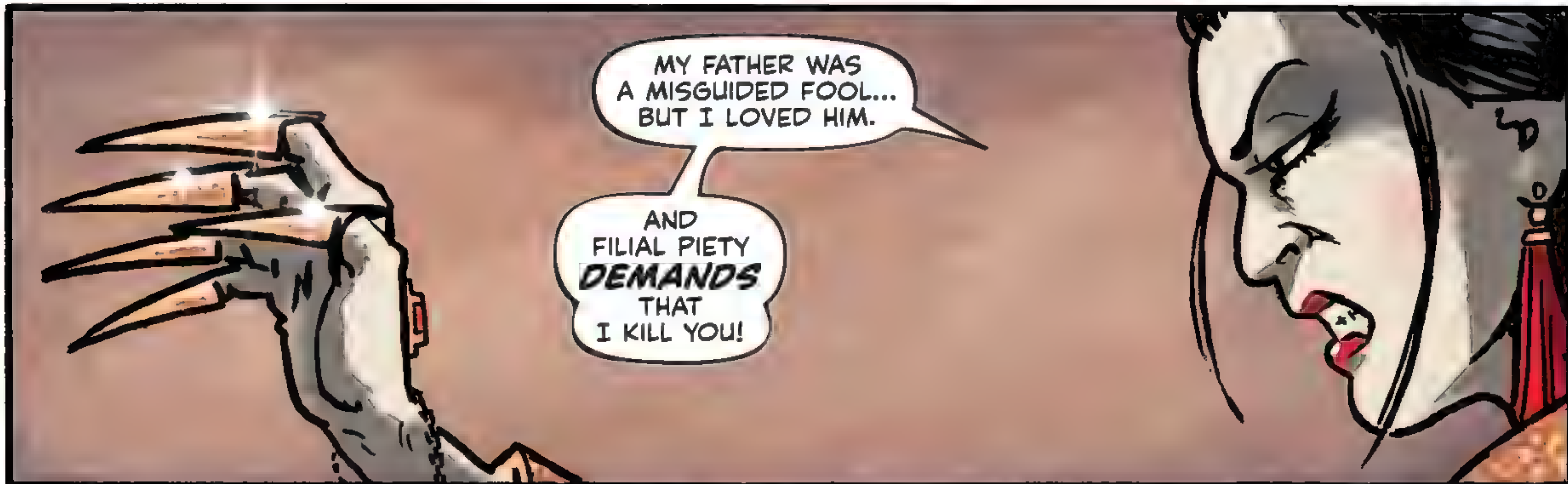
ALL CONDITIONS THAT
ARE RIPE FOR MY SPECIAL
TYPE OF EXPLOITATION.
THERE ARE UNTOLD RICHES AND
POWER TO BE GAINED THRU
SOUTHEAST ASIA.

WHY
SHOULD I GIVE
A **DAMN** ABOUT
THE WEST?



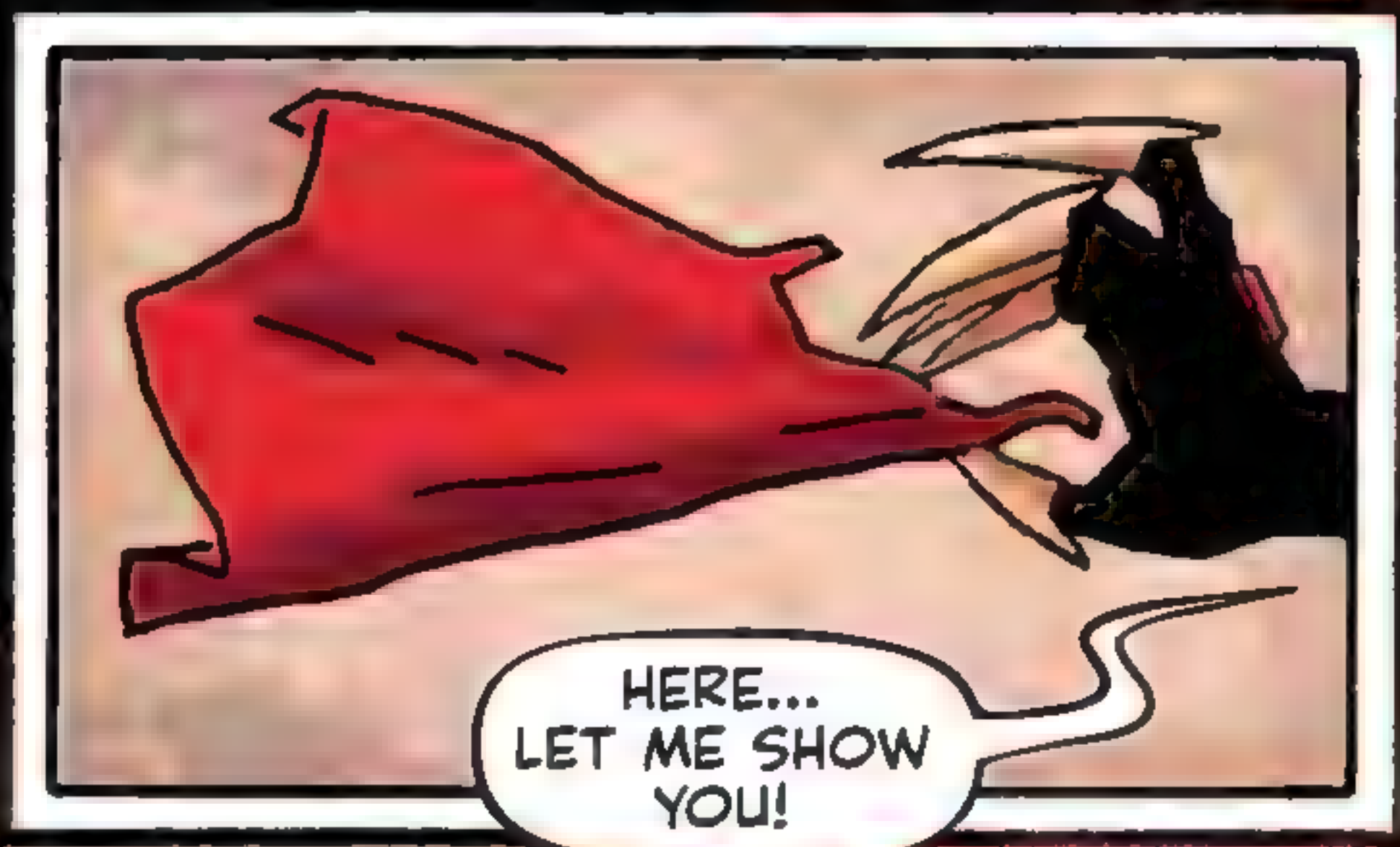
STILL...
YOU LET
MY FATHER DIE
HORRIBLY.

TRAPPED IN THE
MIDST OF A RAGING INFERNO,
AND LOCKED INSIDE THE
FUNERARY CASK OF OUR MOST
HONORED ANCESTOR.



BECAUSE YOU SEE...
LOVE IS A SLIPPERY THING.
VOLATILE. MALLEABLE.
TREACHEROUS.

SO VERY
CLOSE TO *HATE*...
GIVEN THE PROPER
STIMULUS AND
NAVIGATION.



HERE...
LET ME SHOW
YOU!



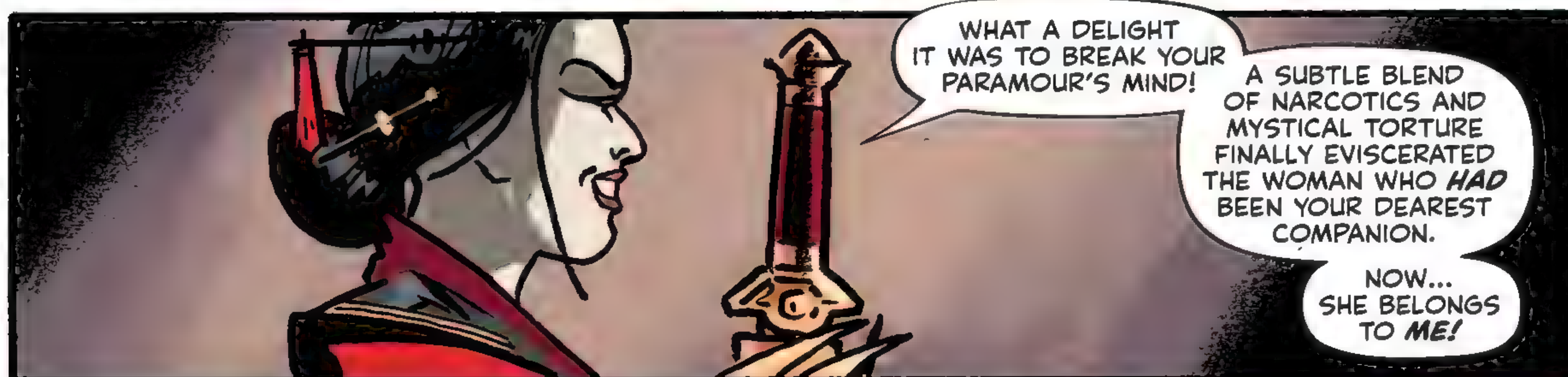
M-MARGO...!



YESSSS...

RUSHING
TO YOUR RESCUE...
SHE STUMBLED STRAIGHT
INTO MY MEN AS THEY
ESCAPED VIA SECRET
TUNNEL.

THE CORPSE THAT
WAS FOUND BELONGED
TO THAT SHIPPING HEIRESS.
NO GREAT LOSS...
HER FAMILY WASN'T *THAT*
WEALTHY AFTER ALL!



WHAT A DELIGHT
IT WAS TO BREAK YOUR
PARAMOUR'S MIND!

A SUBTLE BLEND
OF NARCOTICS AND
MYSTICAL TORTURE
FINALLY EVISCERATED
THE WOMAN WHO *HAD*
BEEN YOUR DEAREST
COMPANION.

NOW...
SHE BELONGS
TO *ME!*



YOU SEE HIM THERE,
MY DARLING?

THE ONE WHO HIDES IN THE SHADOWS.
THE ONE WHO ENSLAVED YOU FOR
ALL THOSE YEARS...

Y-YES...
I SEE...



YING KO...
THE DECEIVER.

YING KO...
THE DEFILER!

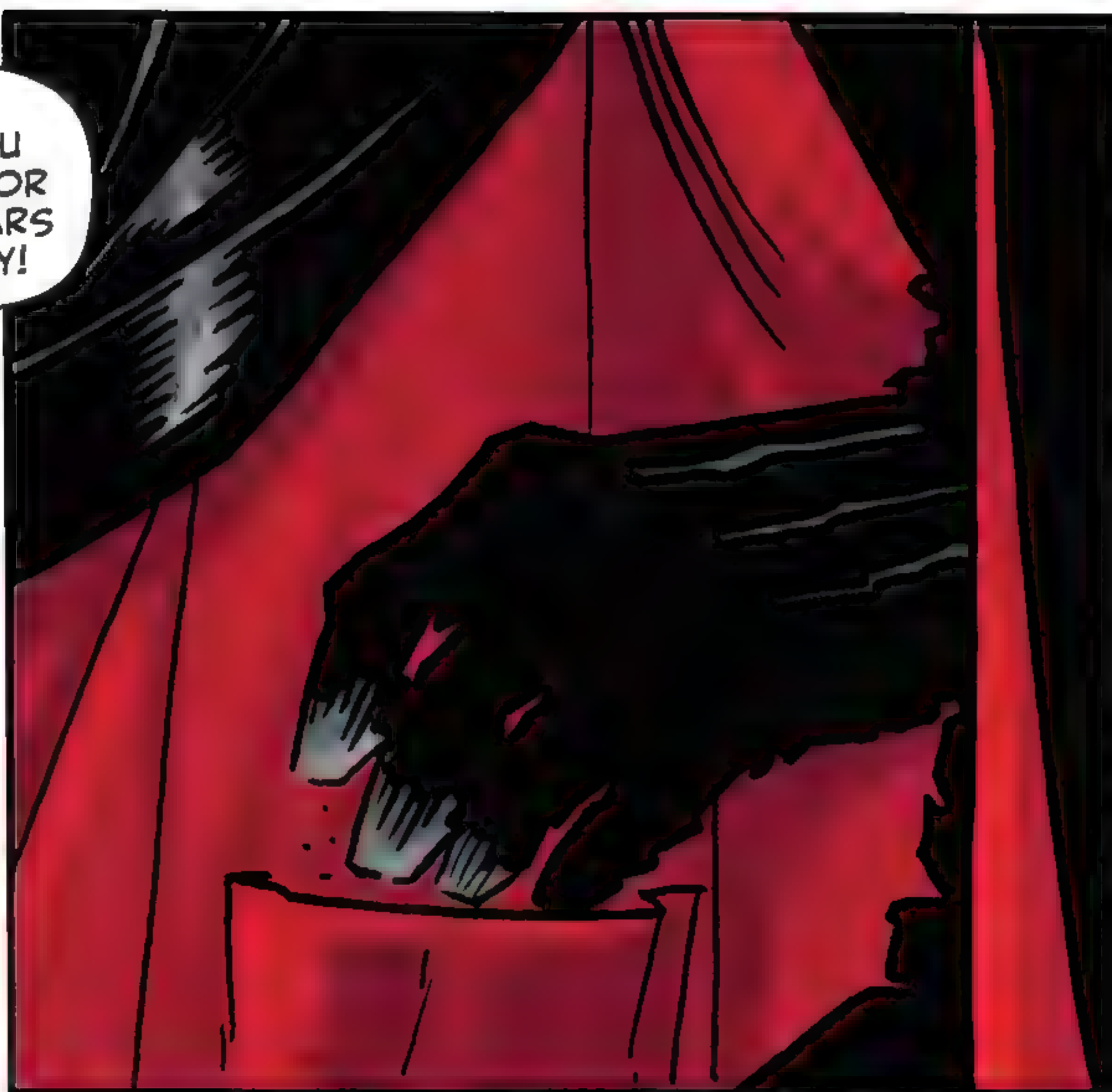








AND
NOW...YOU
WILL PAY FOR
ALL MY YEARS
OF MISERY!

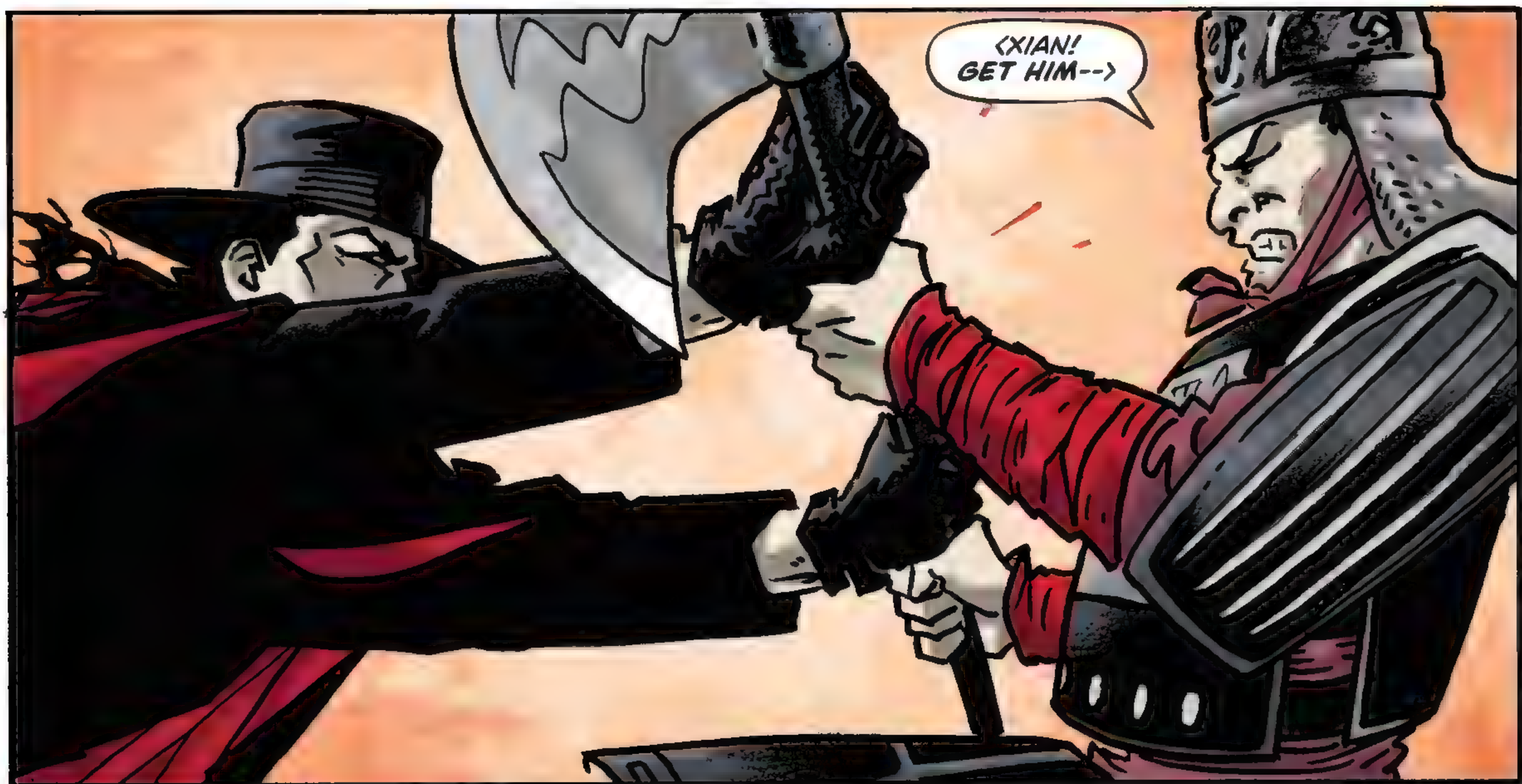


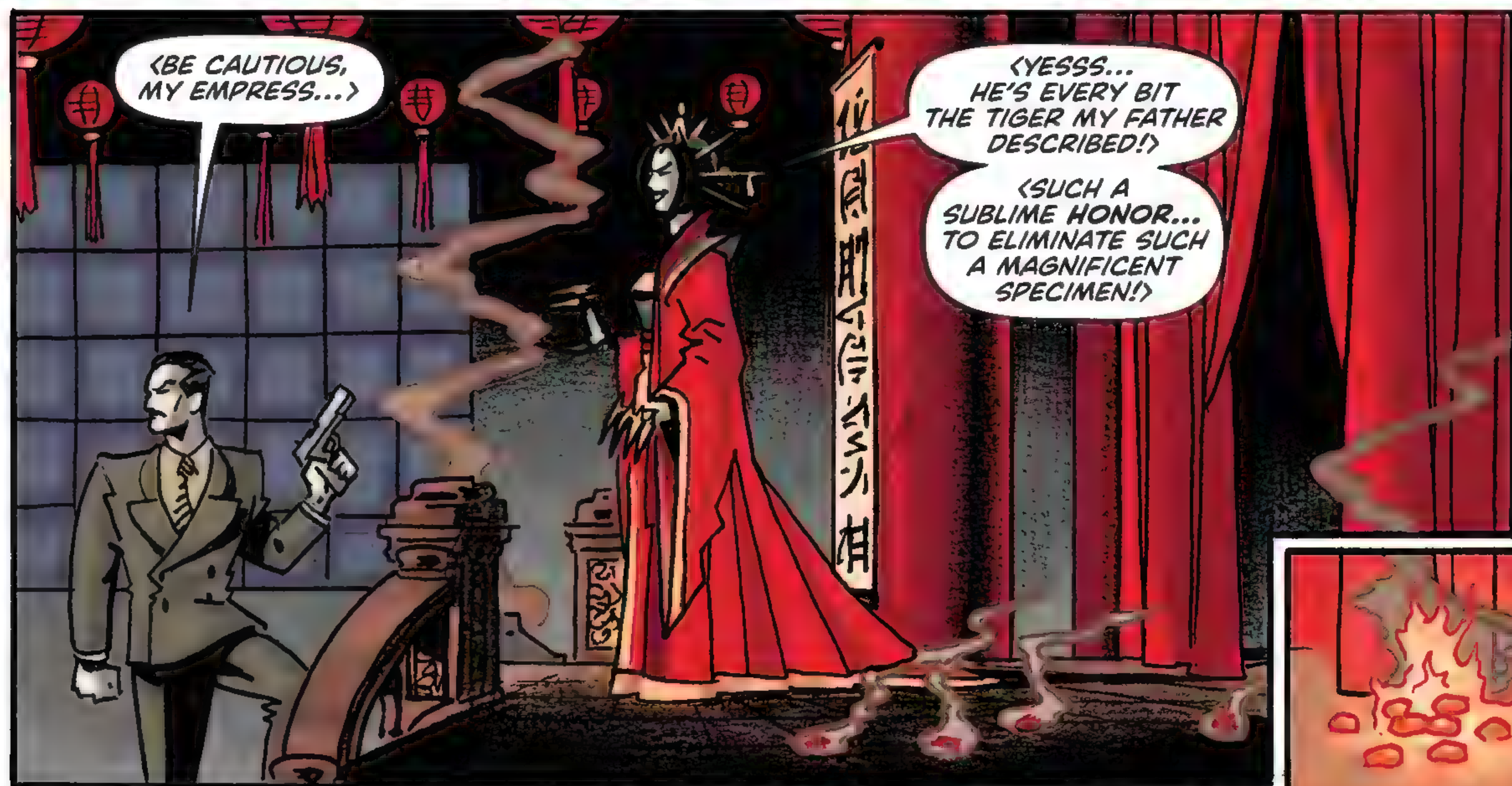
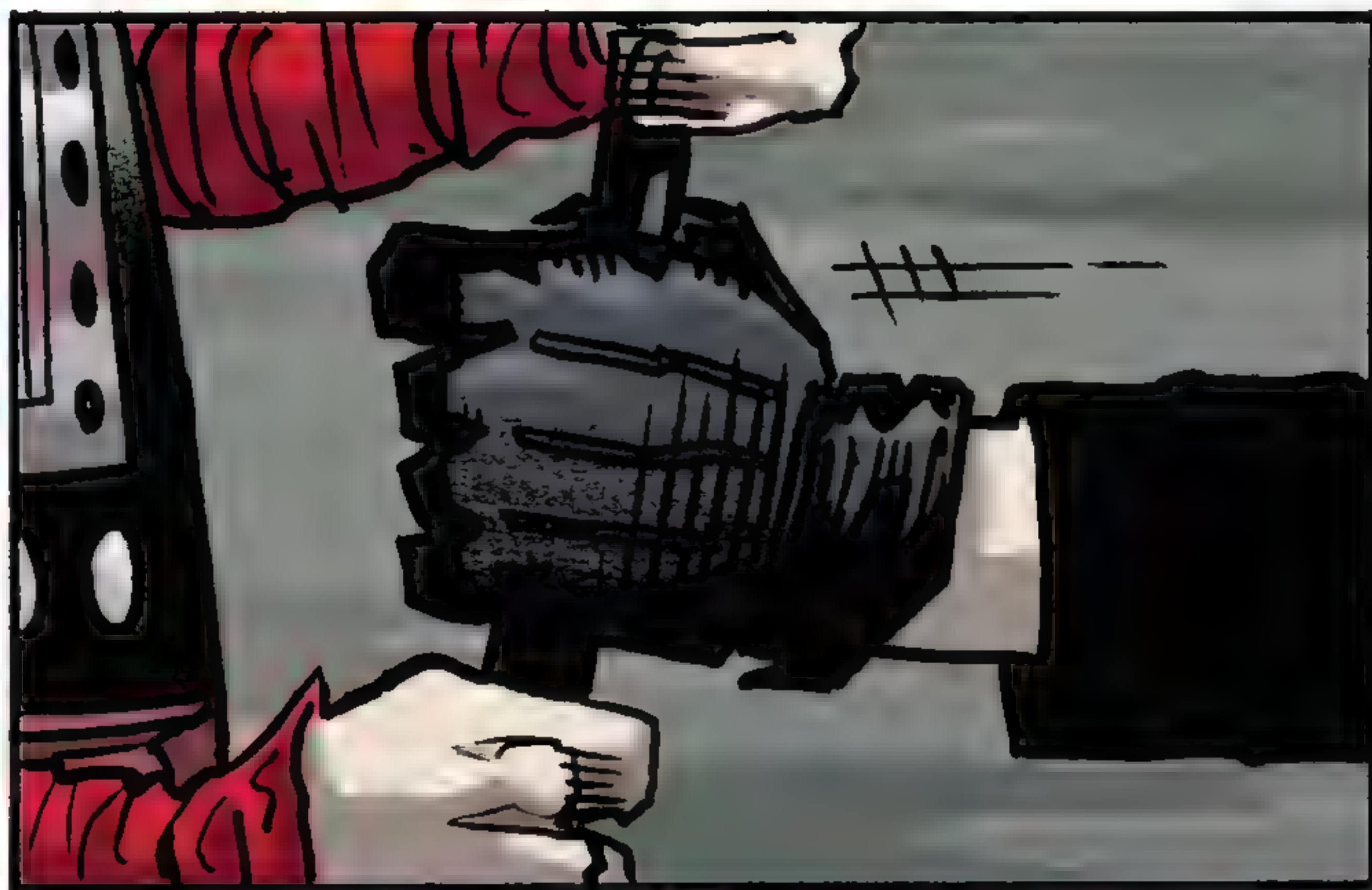
SNAP

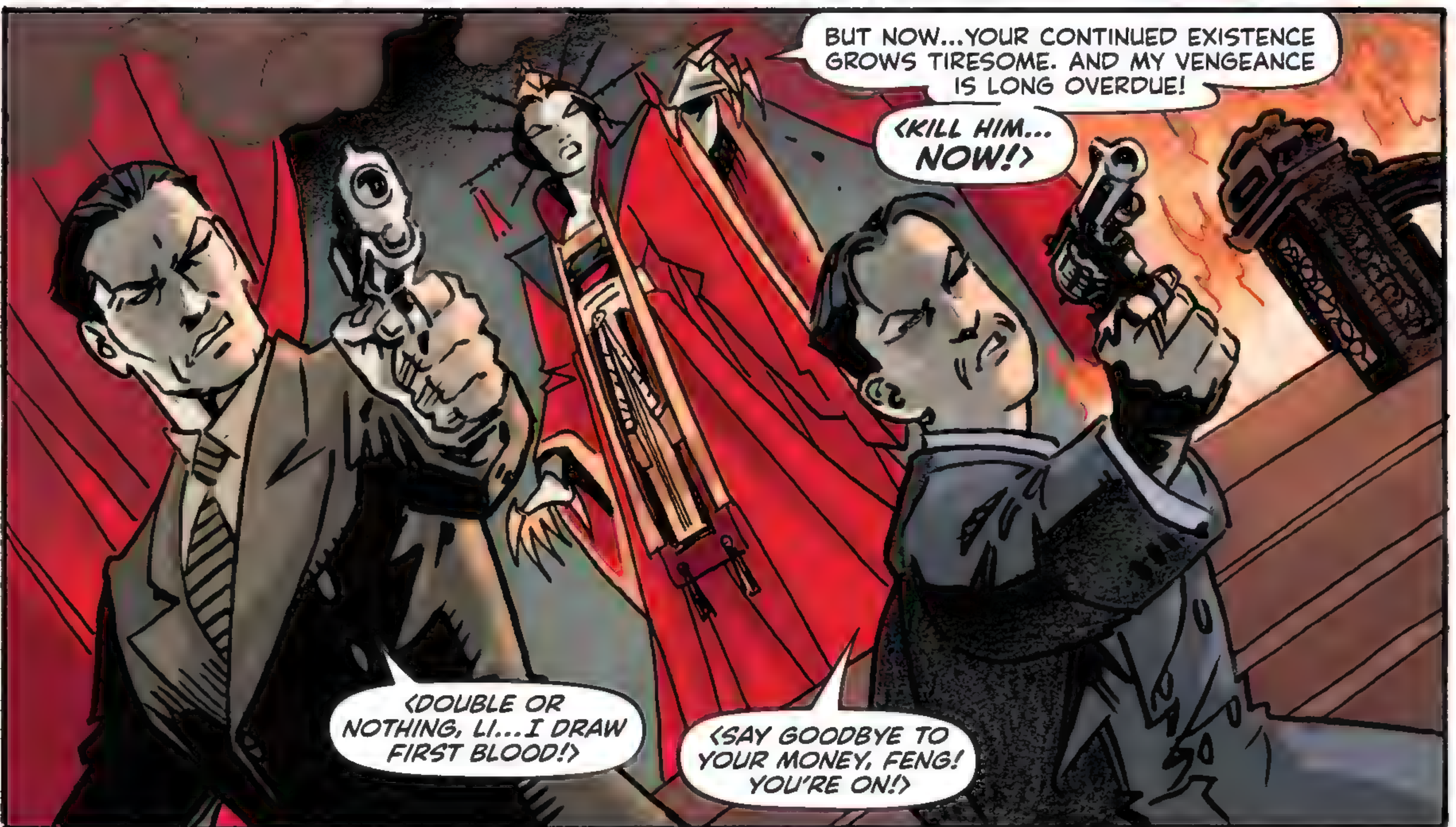
AGH--!

POOSH

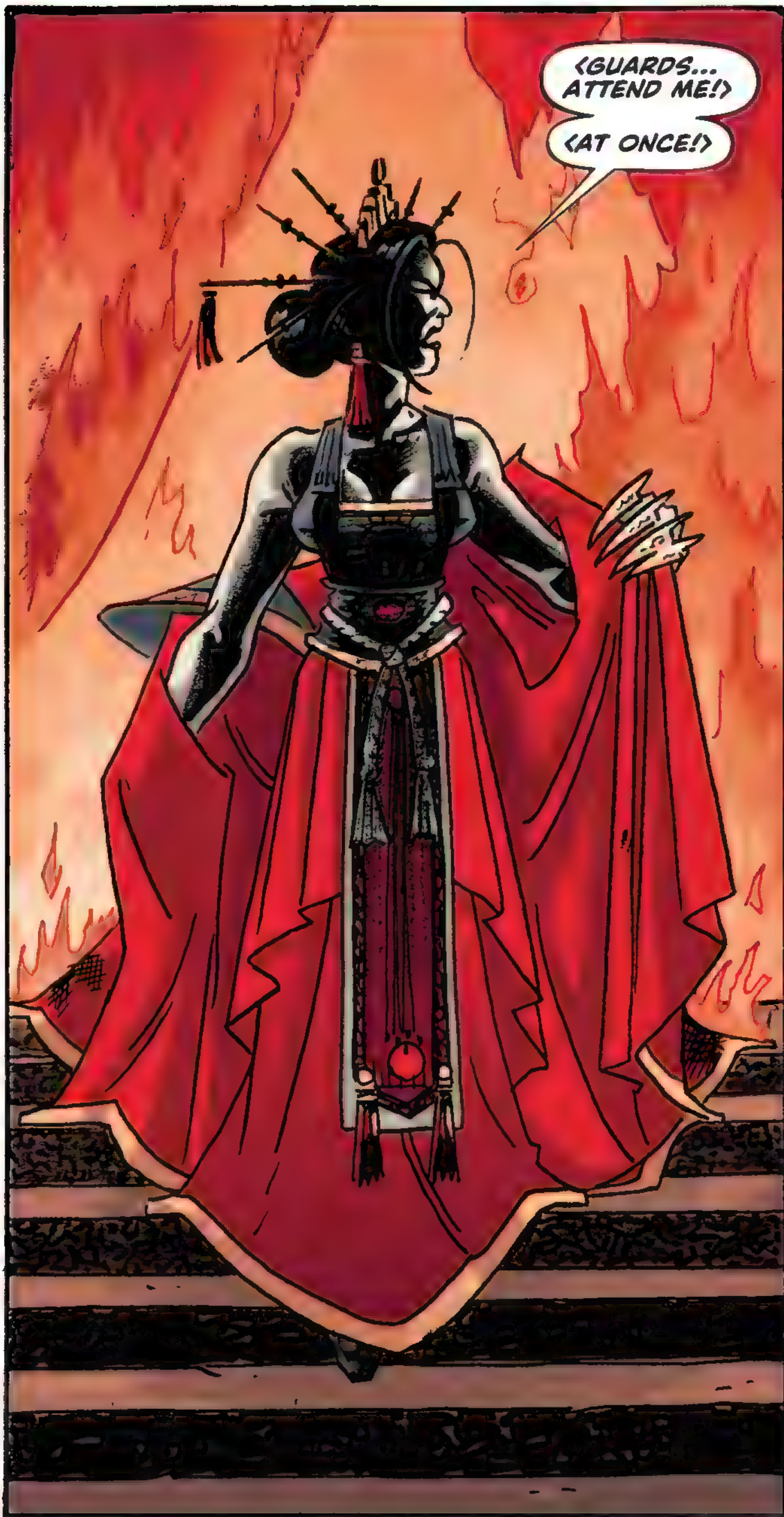










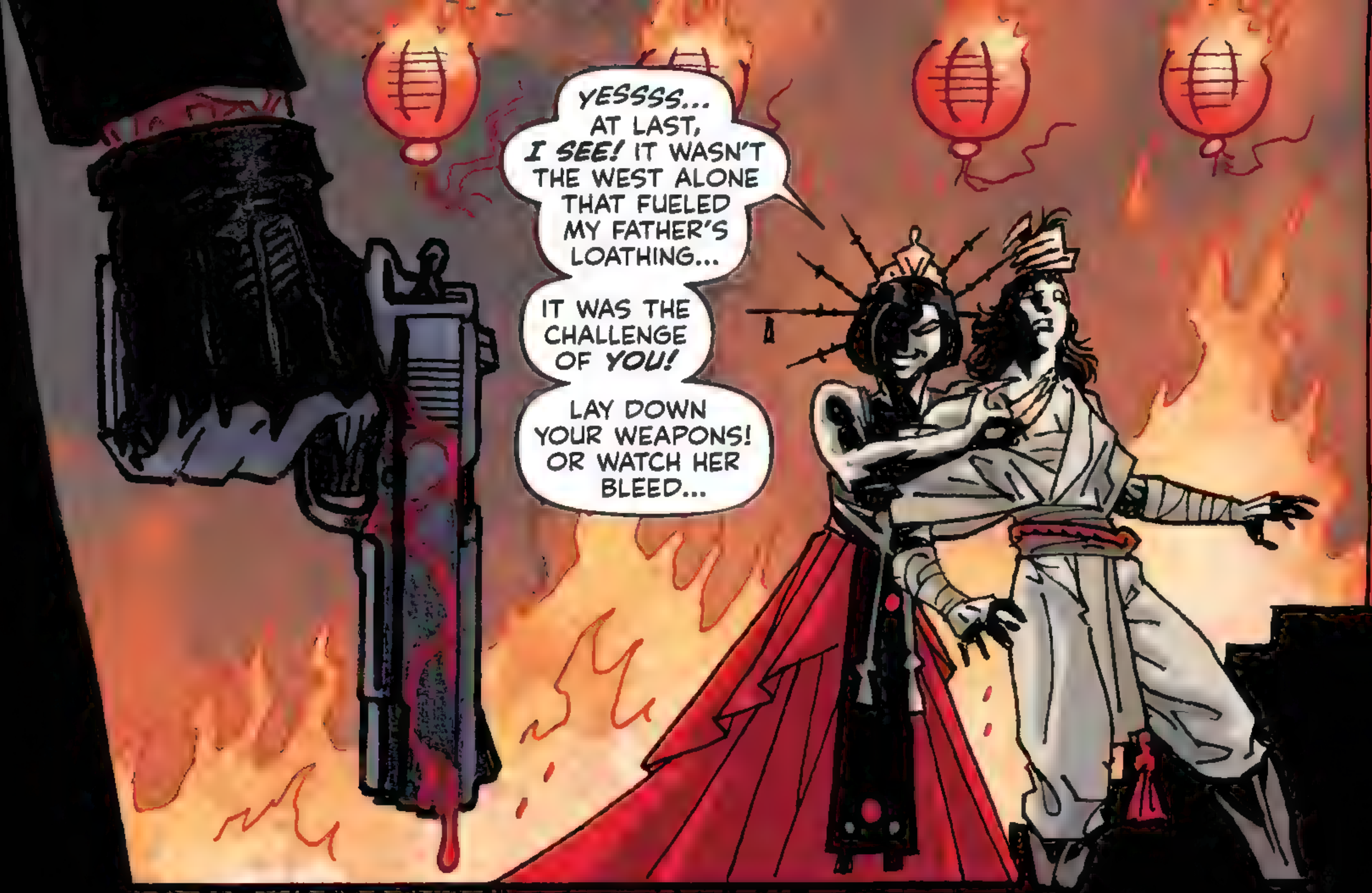


PING BANG BANG BANG









YESSSS...
AT LAST,
I SEE! IT WASN'T
THE WEST ALONE
THAT FUELED
MY FATHER'S
LOATHING...

IT WAS THE
CHALLENGE
OF YOU!

LAY DOWN
YOUR WEAPONS!
OR WATCH HER
BLEED...

MARGO...
LISTEN!



HEED
MY WILL...



NGH!

KRAK





MARCO!
FOCUS ON
MY VOICE!
BREAK THRU...
AND BE FREE!

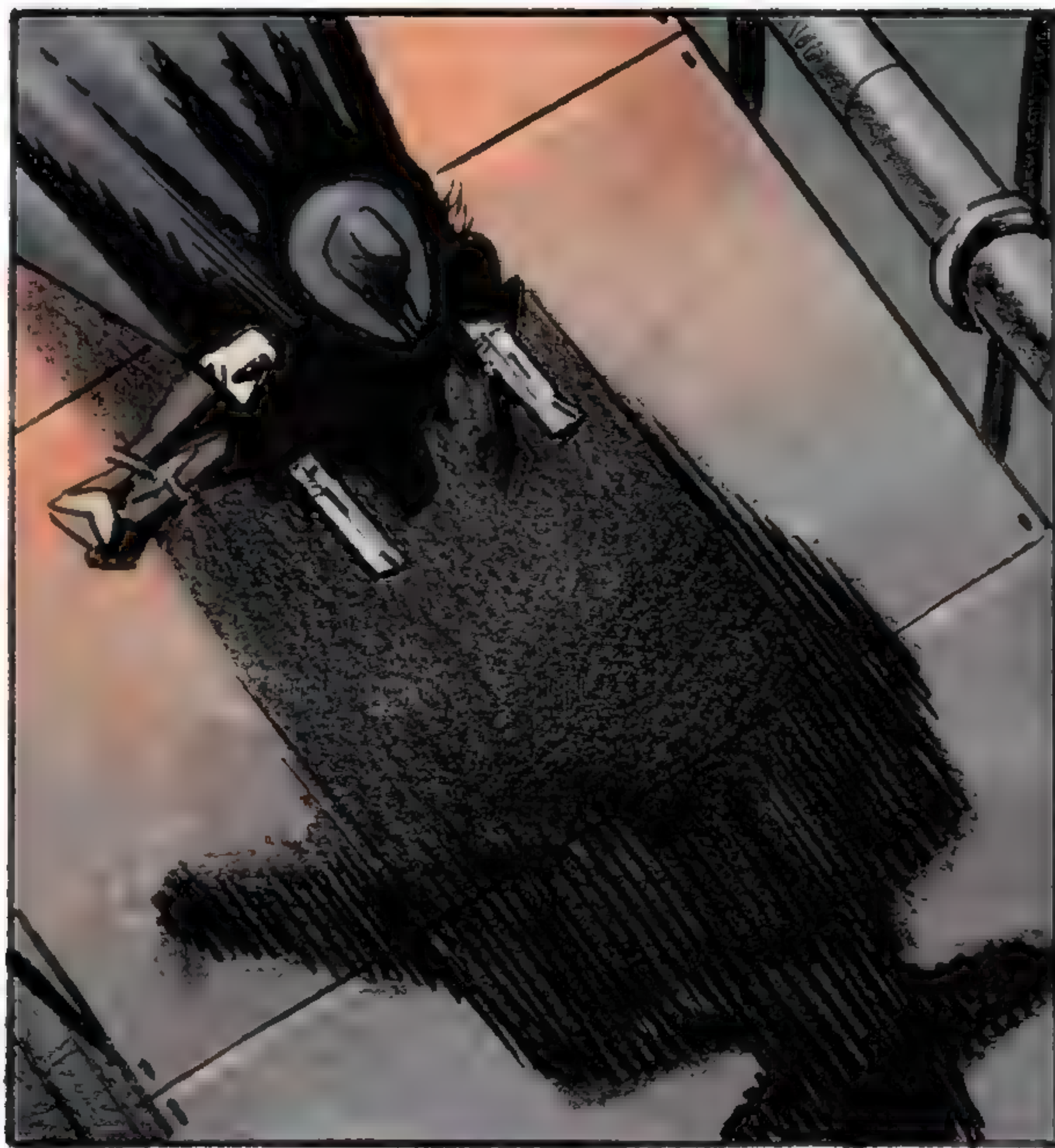
I...
I'M NOT--



Y-YOU!
DECEIVER!
DEFILER!

I--
->NNHHH<...







**〈FIND
THE INTRUDER!
HE HAS CRIPPLED
THE MISTRESS!〉**

**<THERE HE IS!
THE FORWARD
BOW!>**

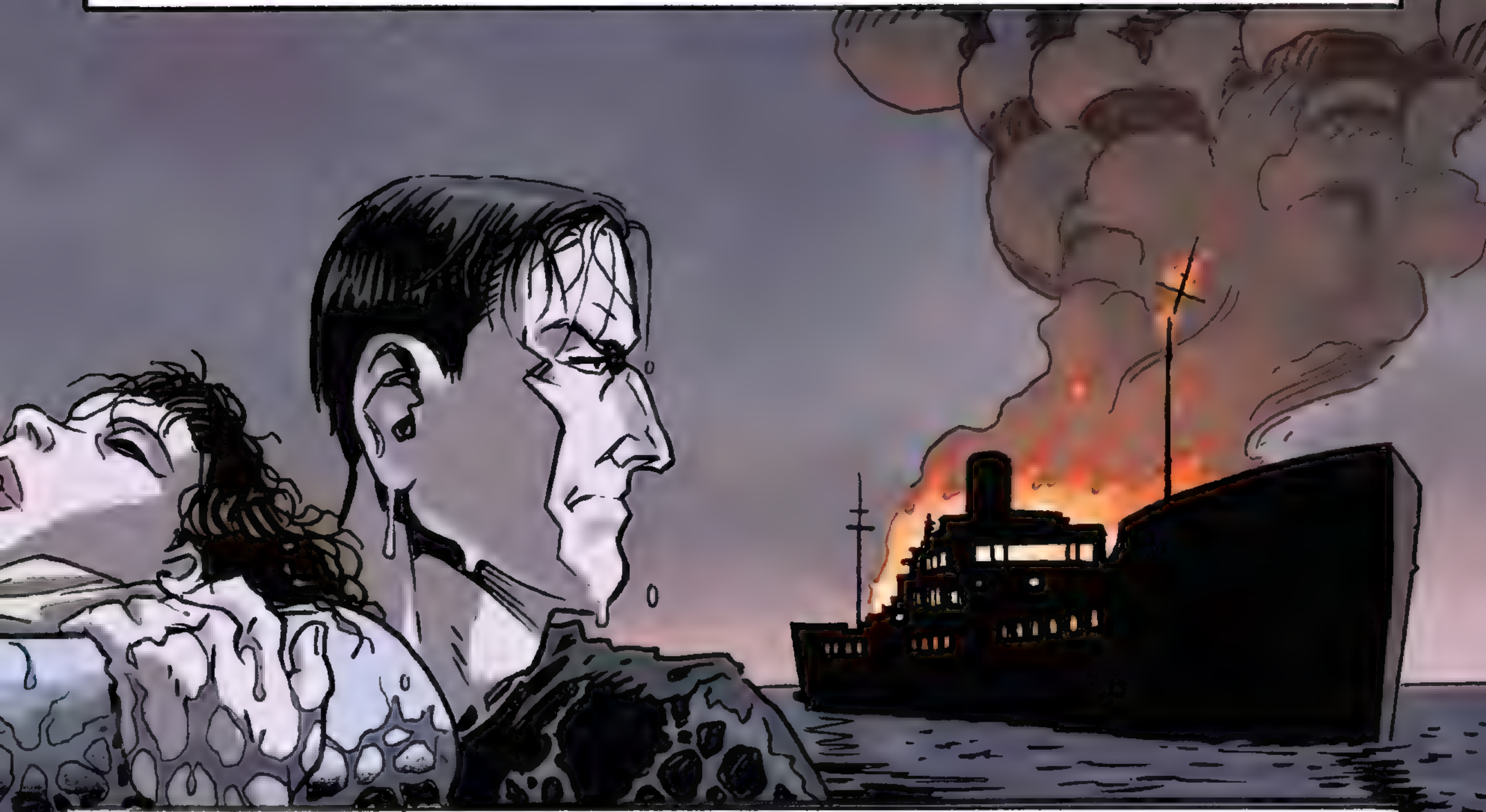
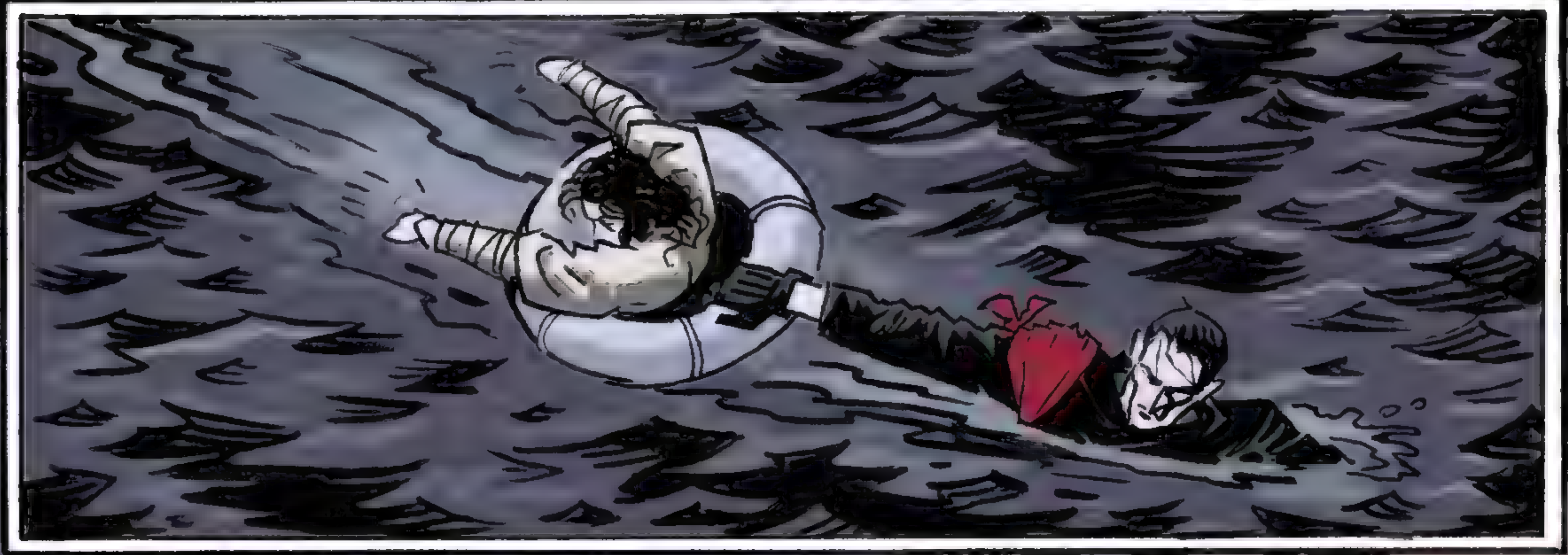


**<IT'S...JUST HIS
HAT AND CLOAK!>**

(HUNG UP ON THIS GUY-WIRE...)

**<ALL HANDS
BELOW DECK!
THE FIRE IS
SPREADING!>**







I can't recall exactly when I resurfaced.

*Through an opiated haze,
I fought to reclaim any
sense of my own identity.*

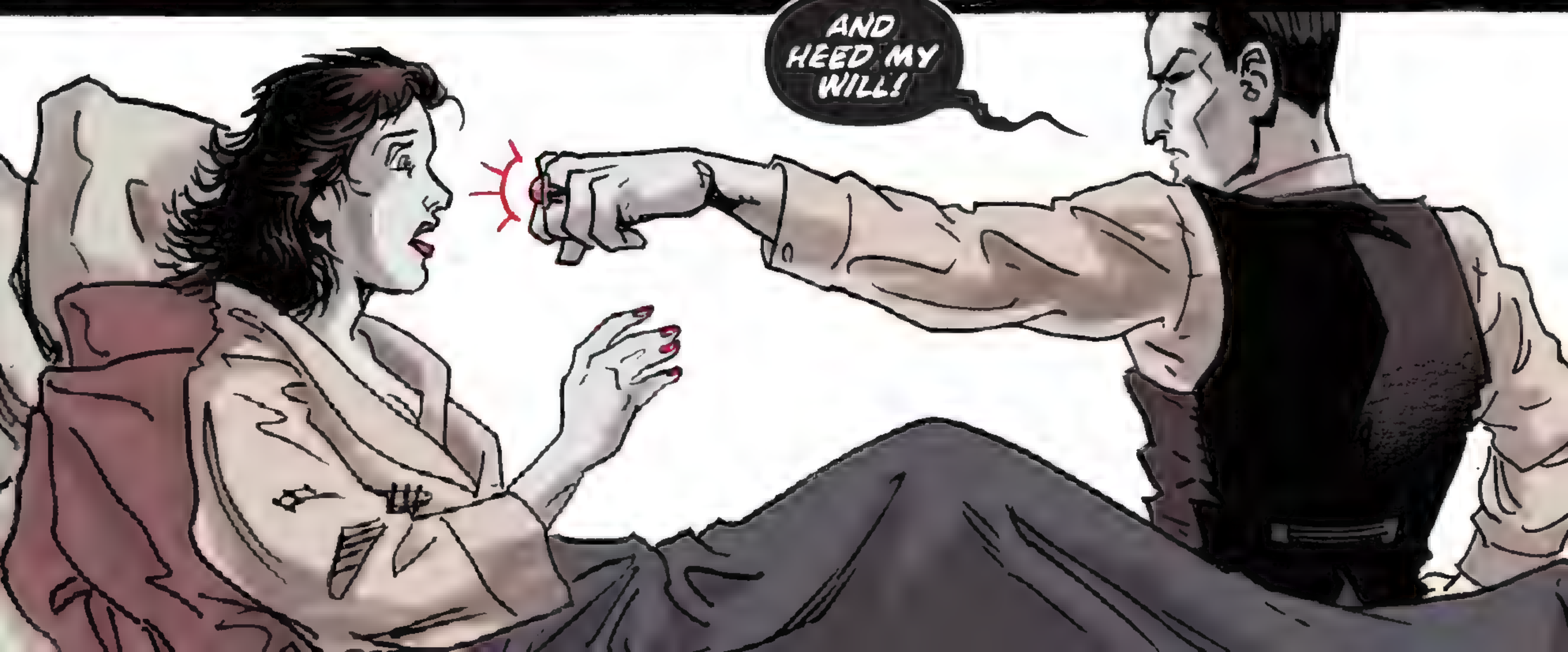
*An experience that can only
be described as harrowing.*


L-LAMONT...?
WH-WHERE
AM I?

WHY...
WHY CAN'T
I RE--



AND
HEED MY
WILL!





For weeks, he struggled
to untangle my mind.

To dispel the hatred
implanted there.

To help me forget
that vile woman's
taint on my soul.

It felt like
being broken.

And
reassembled.

Over and
over again.

over

and

over

and

over

ENOUGH!!



I...
CAN'T DO THIS
ANYMORE.

MY MIND *IS*
CLEARER NOW. BUT THE
WAY YOU'VE BEEN TREATING
ME...IT'S THE SAME AS WHAT
SHE DID TO ME.

BOTH OF YOU...
WERE *INSIDE* ME!

YOU CAN'T
IMAGINE HOW
THAT FEELS.



TO BE SO
DEVOID OF YOUR OWN
FREE WILL...SUBJECTED
TO ANOTHER PERSON'S
WANTS AND AIMS.
IT'S HORRIBLE.



IT'S AS IF...
A PART OF
ME DIED.



PLEASE...

DON'T.



*Despite his
best efforts...*

...the damage was done.

IT'S NO USE,
LAMONT.

I CAN'T MAINTAIN
THIS FACADE...
I CAN'T CONTINUE
ON AS IF NOTHING
HAS CHANGED.

STANLEY WILL
DROP ME OFF AT THE
TRAIN STATION.

I'D LIKE TO
ASK THAT YOU MAKE
NO EFFORTS TO FIND ME...
BUT I KNOW THAT'S A
POINTLESS REQUEST.

I WISH
THINGS WERE
DIFFERENT.

BUT IF I STAY...
I'LL NEVER BE SURE
THAT I'M ANYTHING MORE
THAN A PUPPET ON
YOUR STRINGS.

GOODBYE,
LAMONT.

I HOPE
AT LEAST THAT
YOU'LL REMEMBER
ME FONDLY.

*Part of me wondered whether
I could make a clean break.*

*I'd spent so many years
at his side, through so
many thrilling adventures.*

*So many death-defying
encounters.*

*Could I really just walk
away from all that?*

*Could I really...just
walk away from him?*

**RING
RING**

**BURBANK
SPEAKING.**

REPORT.

**AGENT
HAWKEYE REPORTS
ENHANCED ACTIVITY
AMONG SUSPECTED
ILLEGAL ARMS
TRAFFICKERS.**

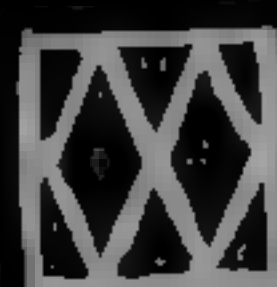
**CLIFF
MARS LAND CONFIRMS A
SHIPMENT OF HIGH-GRADE
EXPLOSIVES SET FOR
DELIVERY TOMORROW
NIGHT.**

*For the sake of my sanity,
I must.*

*Whether that
means forever...*



**THE
END**







ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN
THE SHADOW #100



A SHADOW MYSTERY

The CURSE OF BLACKBEARD'S SKULL ♦

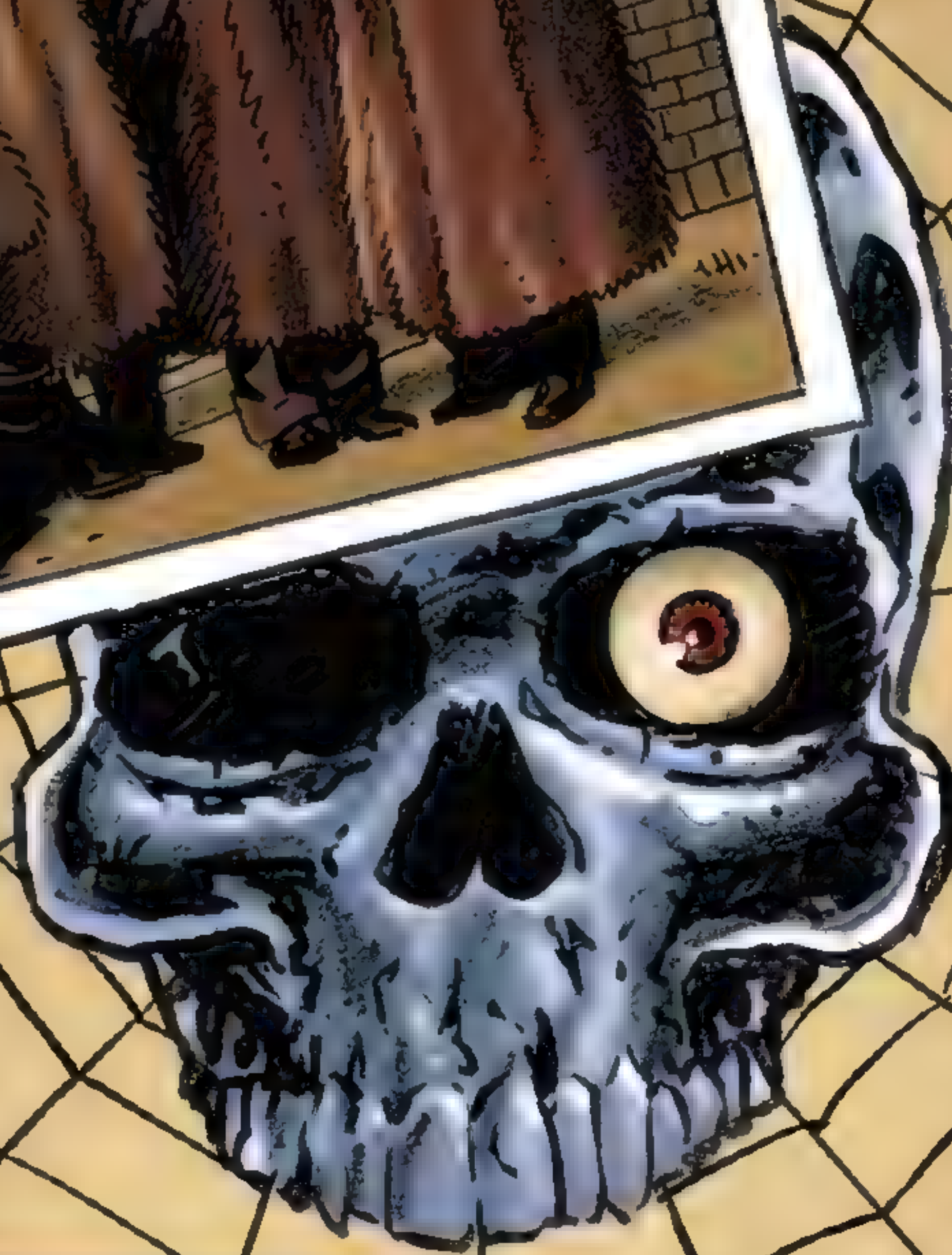
by
Matt Wagner

In November of 1718, under orders from the Governor of Virginia, Lieutenant Robert Maynard led a naval mission that successfully trapped and killed the notorious pirate Edward Teach, infamously known as "Blackbeard". Following the deadly battle, Maynard mounted Teach's head on the bowsprit of his frigate, as a warning to other buccaneers. Some months later, the head mysteriously vanished leading to rumors that it was stolen by surviving members of the pirate's still-loyal crew who then boiled the skull free of all flesh and coated the gruesome relic in molten silver. Over the years, the skull passed through many hands and eventually became an icon to several fraternal organizations who incorporated it into their covert and arcane rituals. Due to its grisly origins, a legend arose that those who retained the skull for too long would fall victim to its original owner's deadly fate.

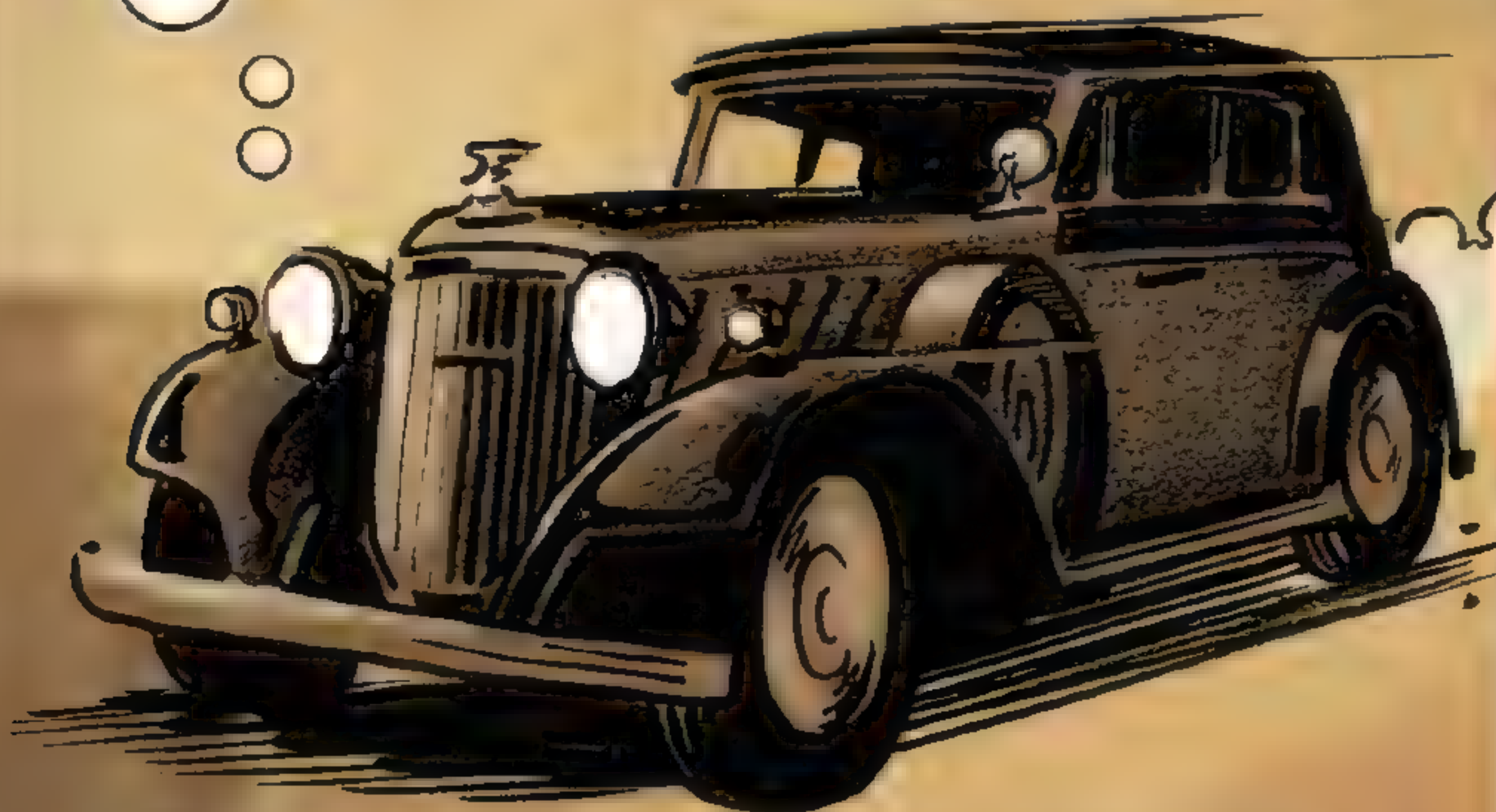
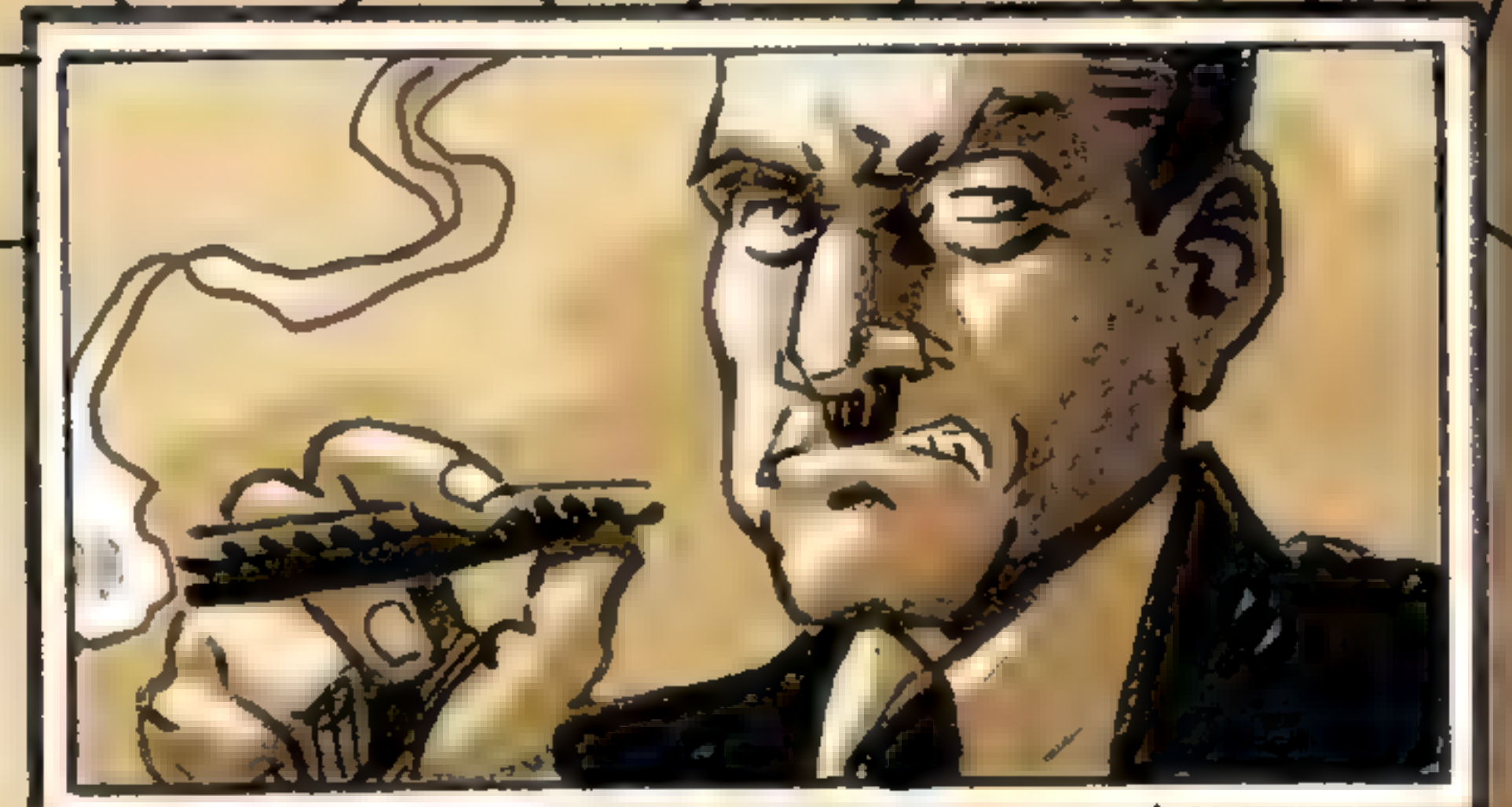




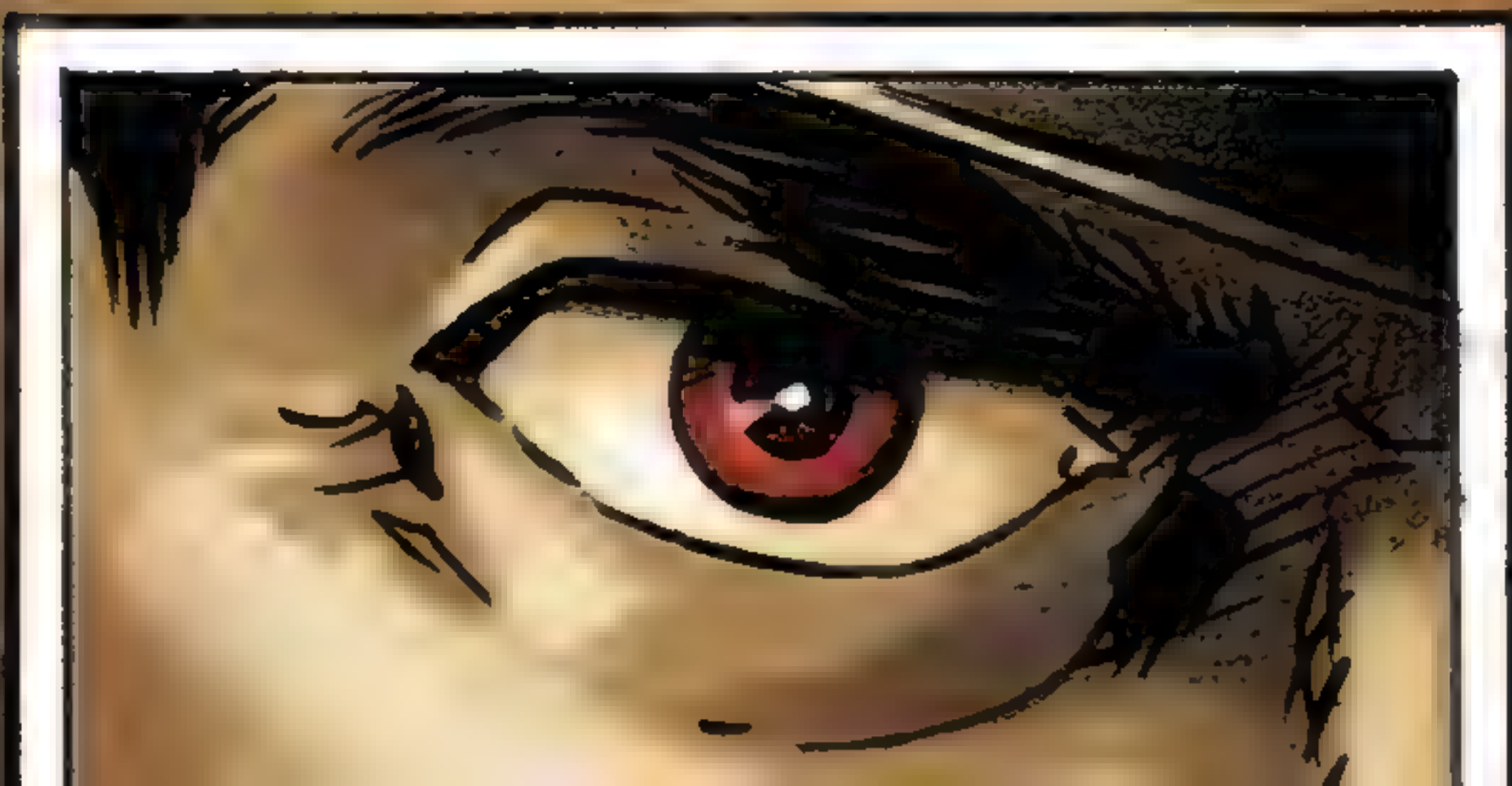
The trophy was eventually acquired by a secret society at Princeton University, a group of five friends who dubbed themselves "The Jolly Rogers". They ceremonially drank from the hollowed out vessel and swore allegiance to their own hedonism on its silver-crusted pate. In a seeming defiance to the skull's supposed jinx, all five went on to become eminently successful following their mutual graduations. And yet they still retained ownership of the argent skull as a way to commemorate and lionize their fraternal bonds.

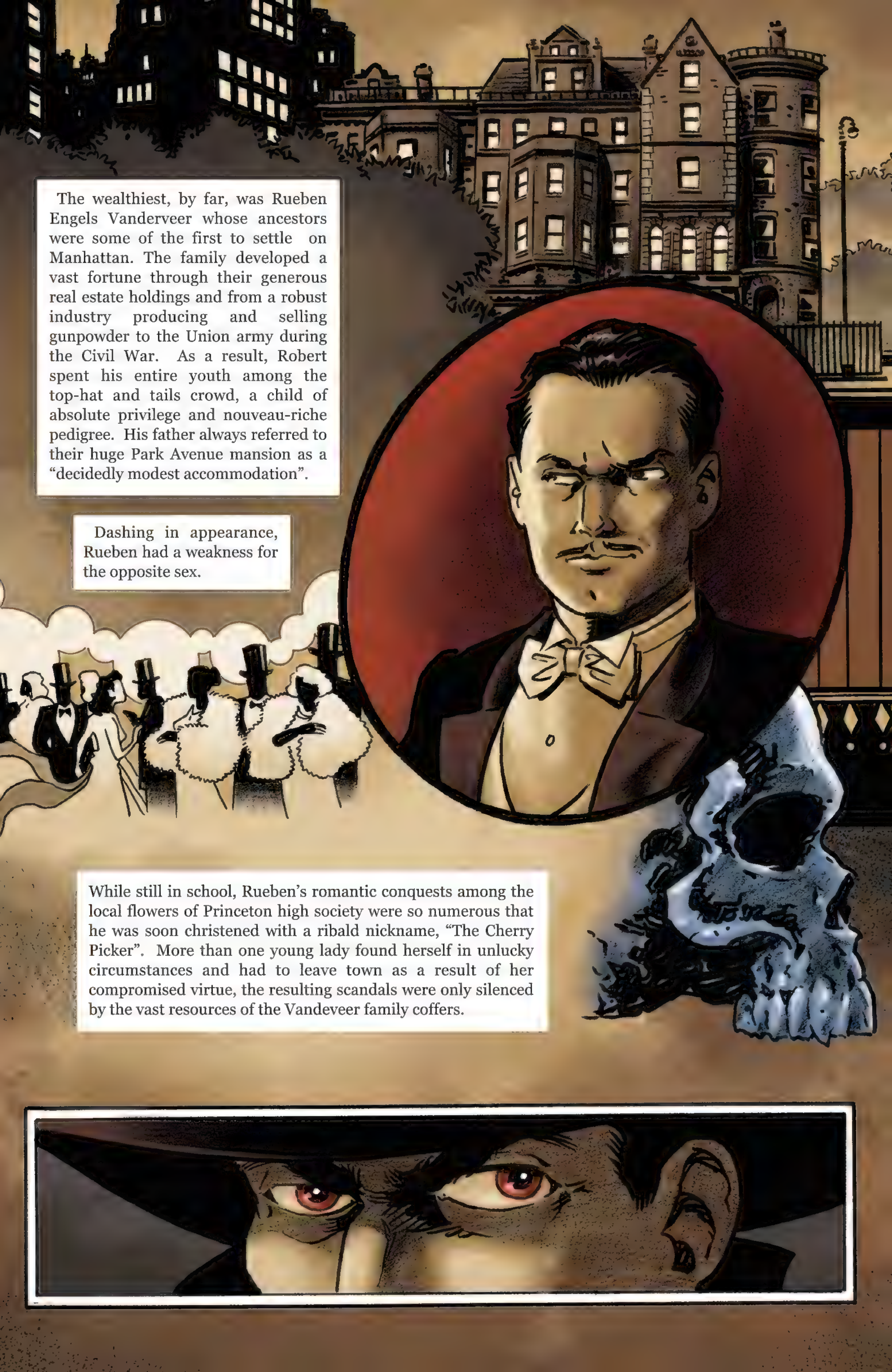


The surliest and most industrious of this crew was Fenton Sykes, who followed a mediocre degree in Applied Sciences to build a thriving empire in commercial steel. In their college days he had always been the first to pass out from heavy drinking and the first to again crack open another bottle on the following morning.




Given his penchant for the sauce no one was particularly surprised when he careened his Cabriolet off the edge of a steep embankment.



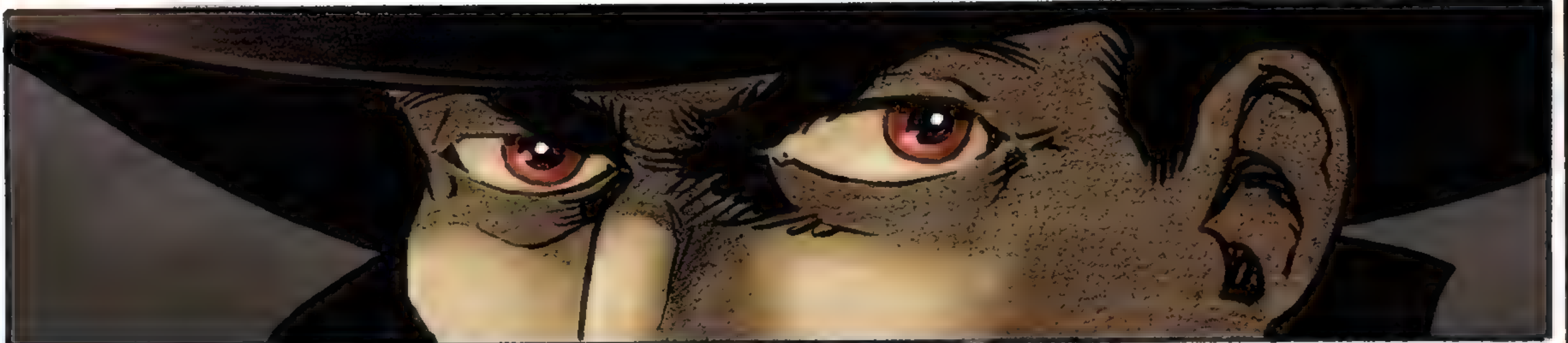


The wealthiest, by far, was Rueben Engels Vanderveer whose ancestors were some of the first to settle on Manhattan. The family developed a vast fortune through their generous real estate holdings and from a robust industry producing and selling gunpowder to the Union army during the Civil War. As a result, Robert spent his entire youth among the top-hat and tails crowd, a child of absolute privilege and nouveau-riche pedigree. His father always referred to their huge Park Avenue mansion as a “decidedly modest accommodation”.

Dashing in appearance, Rueben had a weakness for the opposite sex.



While still in school, Rueben’s romantic conquests among the local flowers of Princeton high society were so numerous that he was soon christened with a ribald nickname, “The Cherry Picker”. More than one young lady found herself in unlucky circumstances and had to leave town as a result of her compromised virtue, the resulting scandals were only silenced by the vast resources of the Vandever family coffers.





The most amiable of the bunch was Dickie Morgenson, the scion of a prominent banking family who followed his clan's traditions and became a Wall Street powerhouse. Despite his affable persona, he gained an iron reputation and managed to survive the Crash of '29 with minimal losses. It thus came as some surprise when he hanged himself...a scant two months following Fenton's deadly accident.

"Most intriguing, Margo...it seems as if someone is *killing off* my former fraternity brothers."

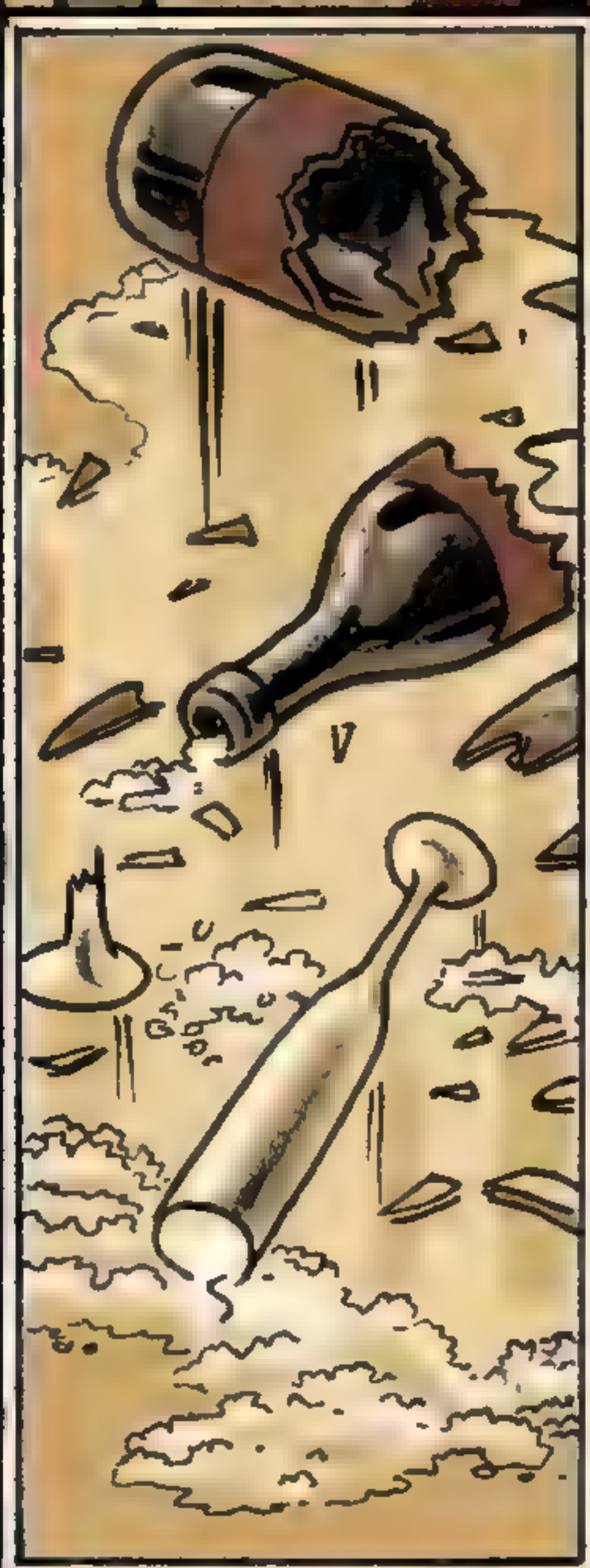
"Are you quite certain?"

"I find there are few coincidences ...where murder is involved."

Despite having married the daughter of another well-heeled family, Rueben Vanderveer continued his lothario behavior.

His latest mistress was a hot-blooded torch singer who, as time progressed, didn't take kindly to the idea of being his affair-on-the-side. She began threatening to phone his wife and expose their liaison, which led Rueben to extreme lengths in trying to placate her petulance. He showered her with jewelry, mink coats and other luxuries to no avail.

Their battle of wills finally culminated in a drunken row one night at the hotel suite he retained for her roost. Neighbors reported shouting, broken glass and gun shots just after midnight.





Three of the Jolly Rogers had now met untimely ends in less than ten weeks.

Only two remained.



The laziest member of their sect was Lamont Cranston, who seemed content to idle his days in the knowledge that he would some day inherit a fortune from his elderly and ailing father, a rail and shipping magnate. Indeed that proved to be the case and “Monty” spent much of his time traipsing around the world on big game hunts or playing the droll man-about-town in the company of his “friend and companion”, Margo Lane. He intrigued almost no one.

The most covetous was Andrew Benning, an investment lawyer of modest origin.



"Andrew Benning! You have carved a trail of death among your former friends and colleagues! You must answer for your crimes!"

"Dear god! W-who are you?!"

"I am the weapon of judgment and vengeance. I am... THE SHADOW!"

"It was *you* who tampered with the brakes on Fenton Sykes' car!"

"It was *you* who falsified stock swindles in Dickie Morgenson's name!"

"NO!"

"And it was *you* who sent champagne to Rueben Vanderveer, laced with cocaine and heroin!"

"You have *no proof*! None of this will stand up in a court of law—**AGGH!**"



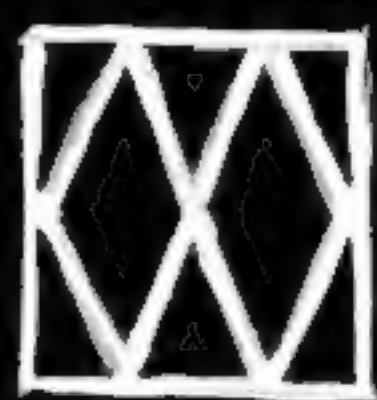
"I serve...only justice!"



Benning had planned to sell the silver skull for a substantial sum to a noted aviation tycoon, an ardent aficionado of pirate lore. His schemes sought to deny his fraternity brothers' compliance and defraud their equal compensation...by any means necessary.

When any object becomes so prized that it inspires larceny, treachery and homicide, it must indeed be considered cursed.

The Shadow knows!



END

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"It's Schkade's artwork that nails this book, reminding me a lot of the Bruce Timm animated style... This is a great showing from Dynamite."
NEWSARAMA

"[Matt Wagner] utterly nails this tone perfectly and feels so completely at home in it that I can't really describe it properly. At the same time, Dan Schkade has been a revelation to me over the past year."
THE FANDOM POST

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